Calvinist Contact

A Reformed Weekly

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Refugees wait — and wait — for a hearing. But at least this group have appointments....

Government report on refugee backlog declared 'misleading'

Bill Fledderus

TORONTO — A federal government news release concerning the backlog clearance program for pre-1989 refugee claimants presents statistics in an "incomplete" and "deliberately misleading way," says the Toronto-based Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (ICCR). ICCR is a committee of the Canadian Council of Churches and an umbrella group of various Christian refugee agencies.

The news release in question was distributed on Oct. 4 by the office of the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC). It claims the refugee claimant backlog program is on budget and will be completed within "revised deadlines." Valcourt claims the program "is working well and [that] final decisions have been made in a majority of cases."

Tom Clark, ICCR co-ordinator, disputes how well the program is working and is hesitant about putting faith in the revised deadlines. "If you judge the program from the point of view of the people receiving it," he says, "it is not working well."

Abuse covered up

ICCR points out that the government's "incomplete presentation of....statistics is deliberately misleading the Canadian public, covering up the abuse of persons through the process and ignoring the fact that families are being destroyed."

The government claims that of the 95,000 claimants, nearly 60,000 have been dealt with and decided, and that 40,000 of these have been provisionally accepted for permanent residence.

ICCR warns that the Department of Employment and Immigration Canada is bragging when in truth it has little to be proud of. To prove its accusations, ICCR attempts to clarify the meaning of government terminology like "acceptance," which it assumes readers will understand to mean final landed immigrant or permanent resident status.

"'Acceptance' actually means only a willingness on the part of the government to begin the landing process," says ICCR.

Clark points out that some refugees he has dealt with are unsure of their status because of not receiving written notice of their acceptance. The government admits that some of its refugee claimant mail has been returned as undeliverable, often due to an unannounced change in residence on the part of the refugee. It also expresses its frustration at the high number of no-shows (50 per cent in Toronto) at refugee hearings.

An onerous requirement

For refugee claimants to be declared acceptable, landing is still conditional, and for many the landing process may take two years after the official acceptance. Bringing a spouce and children could take three years, according to ICCR sources.

In order to be "landed," the refugee must, among other things, prove that he or she has found a full-time work position. According to ICCR, this is an "onerous" demand since employers are leary of hiring refugees whose work permits could expire upon the resolution of their cases. Many refugee claimants now work several part-time jobs, but part-time jobs do not fulfil the requirement. The government is content with having given backlog claimants the right to work and study.

In the worst case scenario, a typical male refugee from 1986, after waiting five years for a decision on his acceptance, may thus have to endure three more years of separation from his wife and children.

ICCR says backlog claimants should be considered Canadian residents, that they have earned the right to stay, and that every possible effort should be made to bring their families to join them immediately. Those who have not yet been accepted should be automatically accepted in order to help put an end to the suffering of separated families and seemingly endless waiting.

Emphasis on protection

In ICCR's view, an accepted backlog refugee, facing a further three years of family separation, is not a completed case — not at least until the rest of the family has also been brought to Canada. ICCR appeals to a United Nations international human rights covenant to which Canada subscribes, which calls for protection of the family. Roger White, public affairs officer for EIC, points out that dependents who are "in danger" or "abandoned" abroad can be granted special visas and reunited with refugee claimants within days.

Minister Valcourt claims that using a general amnesty to speed up family reunions would be "unfair" and reward "those who would abuse Canada's inherent generosity towards genuine refugees." He claims "inevitable delays" are the result of the "need to ensure fairness."

ICCR is of the opinion that allowing in some unjustified claimants is a small price to pay to end the suffering of the vast majority of legitimate claimants.

While many refugee arrivals from 1989 have already had their families join them, 35,000 backlog cases remain from 1988 and before, claimants who may have to wait until December 1992 before reaching even the acceptance stage and potentially not until 1997 before seeing family members again.

Bob Rae challenges Ontario to take a positive lead in nation-building

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — The impact of succeeding in building a united Canada will be felt throughout national life, but we need to do it right. These were key points Ontario Premier Bob Rae made in an opening speech to a three-day conference on "Ontario in Confederation" held recently at the University of Toronto.

The conference of 120 invited persons was called by the legislature's all-party Select Committee on Ontario in Confederation. It was itself a sort of sample constituent assembly in Ontario, drawing participants from all sectors of Ontario life for open discussion with no holds barred.

Thinkbit:

One man said, "I know what is right." A second man said, "I know what is wrong." A third observed, "Good. Together you make one wise man."

Noah ben Shea in *Jacob the Baker*

Rae set out to give his personal sense of challenge and his frame of mind in building Canadian unity. Ontario has most of the kinds of diversity seen throughout Canada, he said. Parts of the province feel left out. Ontario has always played a critical balancing role in the discussion of Canadian identity.

Canada is inevitable

We can't take Canada for granted, said Rae. Differences like those that exist in Canada are fracturing nations around the world. We don't have the luxury of confrontation, nor of saying that if we turn away from our problems they will go away. We don't have lots of time to dither with them, either.

Yet there is a certain degree of inevitability about Canada, added Rae. If it didn't exist we'd need to invent the nation. There are common interests and associations. Economic and social union makes sense.

But there must be flexibility because when you say there are differences, when you speak of association, you must move from thinking that everyone must be like you. Distinctiveness makes sense, said the premier, but we must also recognize that sovereignty will be limited. To acknowledge a "distinct society" is appropriate because that does not take anything away from me. Anyone who does not think Quebec is a distinct society should spend a week there, said Rae.

Rae spoke without notes in both English and French. One of the invited conference participants was Gerald Vandezande of Citizens for Public Justice.

Much of the work of the conference was done in eight workshop sessions on the topics of fundamental characteristics and values of Canada, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, aboriginal issues, constitutional change and the economy, Quebec's future in Canada, division of powers, national institutions and the political system, and the process of constitutional reform.

Reformation Day Issue

In this issue:

Was John Calvin a prince or a tyrant? Marian Van Til examines the life and person of the Genevan reformer..... pp. 10 and 15

Should you be afraid of Calvinists? asks Bert Witvoet. Not unless you are a sinner..... pp. 11-12

Last call to those thinking of leaving the CRC..... p. 13

Evangelical churches in Israel face continued persecution..... p. 14

News

Nazi collaborator Luitjens loses court battle

Stan de Jong

OTTAWA, Ont. — Mr. Justice Frank Collier of the Federal Court of Canada ruled on Oct. 23 that Jacob Luitjens lied about his past in 1971 when he successfully applied for Canadian citizenship.

Luitjens, 72, a retired University of British Columbia botany instructor, is wanted by the Netherlands where he was convicted in absentia in 1948 and sentenced to life imprisonment for having collaborated with the German Gestapo in rounding up Jews and delivering them to Nazi authorities for detention and torture.

The court's long awaited decision (the Luitjens trial ended May 11, 1989) may result in quick action by the federal government to strip him of his citizenship and subsequent deportation.

Significant ruling

According to the *Toronto Star* (Oct. 24, 1991) this is the first time Canada has ever taken the denaturalization route in attempting to rid the country of alleged war criminals.

Justice Minister Kim Campbell said that her department is now reviewing every war crimes case under investigation to see if this method should be used again. The government has revealed it has over 45 other high-priority investigations.

The decision is the first victory Ottawa has had since the government amended the Criminal Code in 1987 to allow prosecution in Canada of suspected war criminals.

Three Ontario residents have been charged under that law: Imre Finta of Toronto, Michael Pawlowski of Renfrew and Stephen Reistetter of St. Catharines. None has been convicted as of this date.

The *Star* said that the decision is important because Justice Collier accepted the evidence of all of the 50 witnesses, including many of Luitjens' former fellow citizens who testified about their horrific wartime experiences.

Luitjens and other Dutch Nazis operated mainly in the area of Roden, the Netherlands, where many of the witnesses resided during the war.

The long delay in rendering a decision has frustrated the federal war crimes unit, angered Jewish groups and embarrassed members of the legal community (*Star*, Oct. 3, 1991).

But elated Jewish groups said, even though it took Collier 29 months to make up his mind, it was worth the wait.

'Life chain' links North American abortion protesters

Photo: courtesy of Life Chain Canada

Pro-lifers hold up anti-abortion placards, printed by the Campaign Life Coalition. One in one hundred was printed with the inscription "Jesus forgives and heals."

TORONTO (LCC) — At least 71,921 Canadian pro-lifers joined in an Oct. 6 demonstration to protest abortion and to celebrate life. In the United States, 771,463 took part.

The demonstration, co-ordinated by the Campaign Life Coalition, was billed as a "life chain," a linked show of continent-wide protest.

Vancouver was the sight of the largest Canadian life chain, with a crowd estimated between 15,000 and 20,000. Toronto's life chain was next largest with 6,900 participants.

All 10 provinces were represented in the 60 Canadian cities which took part in the demonstration. Forty states were represented by 373 cities across the U.S.

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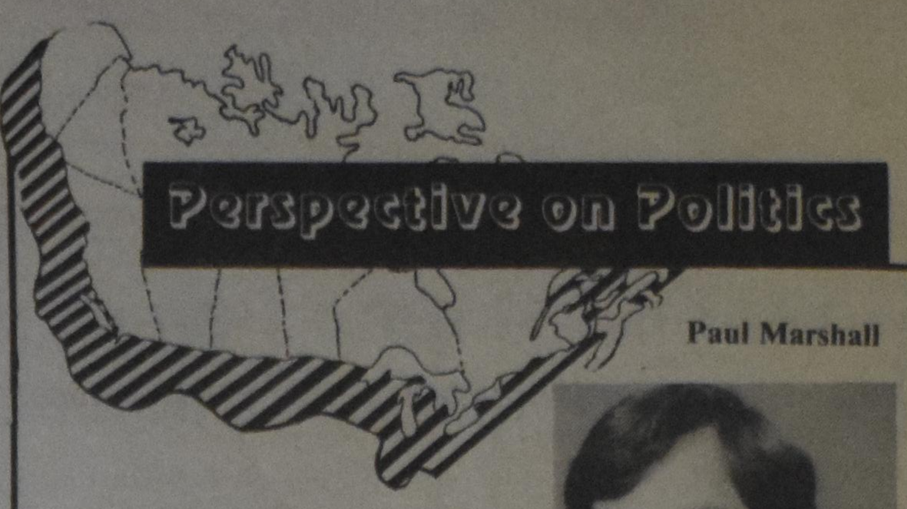
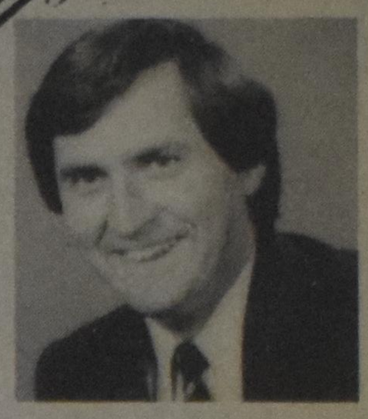
Perspective on Politics



Paul Marshall



In praise of compromise

The old cliche has it that politics is the art of the possible. But then, everything is the art of the possible. Business is. Education is. Marriage is. Certainly sex is.

What the cliche tries to highlight is that politics involves compromise. This is a lesson we will learn, or should learn, as we wrestle with the issue of the future of Canada. It is a recurrent challenge in issues such as abortion or pornography, not to mention education, international trade and war.

But many Christians, especially evangelicals, believe that compromise is a fundamentally evil thing. Indeed people of conservative theology sometimes define their stance, and its correctness, by their refusal to compromise. We often hear it said that one of the major problems of the church today is its readiness to compromise.

I think these sentiments are wrong. Anybody who is married and who has gone through a day without compromising is probably in trouble. If you live with another person you have to compromise. You want to do one thing, they want to do something else. So what do you do if you're a moderately sane person? Either split it down the middle or do one thing today and another tomorrow. That's what living with another human being is all about.

Perhaps it can be replied that compromise is OK in the day-to-day affairs of personal preference, but that this is a far cry from fundamental matters. This is true. But we need to be careful about what we regard as fundamental.

God compromised too

People often claim that God never compromises, but this is at variance with the Bible. Many biblical figures (Abraham, Moses, Samuel) argued with God and won (some, like Jonah, didn't). Abraham and God haggled over the number of righteous people required to save the city of Sodom (Gen. 18: 17-32) and Abraham seems to have won the day. What was God doing? Compromising with Abraham.

Some might say that this was purely for educational purposes (I agree) and that God has planned the outcome all along. Maybe. But Abraham didn't know. And if we ever get into an argument with God we won't know either. We'll just have to argue and compromise for what we think best. Certainly there are enough examples of divine compromise in the Bible.

It's true that we should not compromise on the fundamentals of the Christian faith. But most of the things we deal with are not fundamentals. We should not compromise on principles: but we seldom meet an unvarnished principle. For example, a law is not a principle. Look at the Old Testament laws. What is the law concerning murder? It's not "Thou shalt not kill." That's the principle governing the law.

The actual laws are described in various parts of the Pentateuch (cf. Dt. 17:8; 19:1-13, 15). There is described the difference between premeditated and unpremeditated killing, what we might call murder and manslaughter. There is the question of how many witnesses are present and required. There were cities of refuge established. When one person killed another without forethought, then he or she could flee to these cities. If the person could get there before the victim's relatives caught up with him or her, the killer was free. At first three cities were built. Later, as Israel grew, more were to be established. The idea was that there should be a reasonable opportunity for someone to get to one of the cities.

Laws are the expression of principles

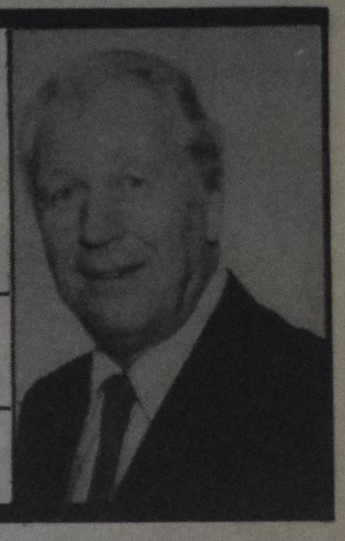
We could go on, but the basic point I want to make is that *this* is what the Israelite *law*, its criminal code, looked like. Rules of evidence, questions of malice and premeditation, possible defences. That was the law, and it was often quite messy. Judges had to be wise because the issues were complex. This law sought to take the principle "Thou shalt not kill" and bring it (along with other principles) to concrete life in the people of Israel. The Bible contains principles — and also laws which are a particular historical expression of these principles.

When we talk about law in Canada, we are not talking about principles *per se* but about *laws*. These laws are, or should be, attempts to articulate as fully as possible a particular principle in a concrete, variable situation. Many different elements, including pragmatic ones, properly go into the making of laws.

Not all compromises are good. Some things should not be compromised. But not all compromise is bad, and much of it is good and essential and praiseworthy and biblical. Christians should drop any flat idea that compromise is wrong. Rather, we need discernment to distinguish the good from the bad.

Paul Marshall is senior member in political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.

Pressreview



Carl D. Tuyl

Well, the Blue Jays did not make it to the really big time: but be not dismayed, we *do* count on the world stage. Monsieur himself was nominated for the post of U.N. Secretary General. The whole country, including the two Barbara's, Frum and McDougall, was abuzz with the news. Such honour! "Will he" or "won't he," will now be the next guessing game.

★ ★ ★

After emitting all kinds of signals we made the turn to the left official when Roy Romanow ascended the seat of power in Saskatchewan. The majority of Canadians are now under pink prefecture. And the NDP, inebriated with success, is planning to offer cash incentives of up to $1,500 to women who want to seek party nomination in the next federal election.

Carol Goar of the *Toronto Star* describes the left-turn as more a populist revolution than a socialist revolution. I am not so sure. It could also be a sort of "let's-take-care-of-each-other, close-the-wagon-circle" move. We haven't been treated too kindly by the others who have chopped a Himalayan-sized chunk out of our buying power, all the while managing to increase our debt load to unheard of proportions.

Canada's Minister of Finance announced that the federal government had spent $30.6 billion more than it had taken in. Oops! The unemployment insurance fund alone paid $11 billion during the first seven months of 1991. Our national debt now amounts to more than $400 billion. We still give Gabon, one of the richest countries in Africa $23 million, though. So who's counting, eh? Credit where credit is due, however. The inflation rate is now down to 5.4 per cent, interest rates are on a declining scale and the average size of a Canadian personal savings account, which was $365 in 1935, is now $5364; Like the farmer said while milking the cow: I must be doing something right.

★ ★ ★

Three responses which made the press: former B.C. premier Bill VanderZalm, who appeared in court on a charge of breach of trust in the $16 million sale of his Fantasy Gardens, after leaving the court room said, "I have lots of no comments"; and Jimmy Swaggart, the tear-jerking, song-singing "evangelist" who was caught in the company of a lady of ill repute remarked, "The devil made me do it." And then there was Rita Johnson, commenting on the recent elections in British Columbia, "I think the results stink."

★ ★ ★

Here in Kingston the temparature tempted me to do summerish things like biking, swimming, barbecuing hamburgers or eating ice cream, but in Alberta people have already suffered the second snowstorm of the season. Who said life was fair?

★ ★ ★

Mr. Ovide Mercredi, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, did a come-uppance on the Quebec separatists when he said that two-thirds of Quebec belongs to Native people. Pow! Right in the *solar plexus francais*. Quebec's Natives also took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* in which they declared that the province's new hydro project would be an ecological disaster. Frere Jacques Parizeau got so worked up about that that the quivering of his mustache registered on the Richter scale.

★ ★ ★

A Canadian entrepeneur, Geoffrey Carr Harris, co-owner of a Soviet-Canadian joint venture print shop, on a visit to his firm in Moscow, discovered that his manager had "diversified" by investing in a rock band, dancing girls and a circus group. The manager got fired.

★ ★ ★

George Gamester of the *Toronto Star* collects classified ads. Here are some of his collection: "For Sale: antique desk suitable for lady with thick legs, and large drawers." Or this one: "For Sale: four-poster bed, 101 years old. Perfect for antique lover."

The *Globe and Mail* keeps track of Canadian patents which are granted. If you're working on "rapid differentiation of fungi from bacteria using polyene antibiotics," forget it. It has been done. The same goes for earring securing devices.

★ ★ ★

The Middle East Peace conference, like a wedding postponed because of the groom's repeated apprehension, is apparently going to happen. Not in Switzerland, as was first reported, but in Spain's capital, Madrid. Israel did not want PLO members of East Jerusalem at the table. The Palestinian delegation will now be made up of non-PLO members, appointed, I bet, by the same organization. Diplomacy is often a matter of semantics.

★ ★ ★

U.N.-led negotiations resulted in the freeing of yet another hostage. The man was held captive for more than five years in the name of some holy war. As if wars could ever be holy. Another U.N. peace effort came to fruition in Paris where the warring parties of Cambodia decided to bury the hatchets. The question that remains is in how far the Khmer Rouge can be trusted. They were responsible for the slaughter of uncounted Cambodians.

★ ★ ★

Talk about standing by your woman: a bull elephant charged a crowd of people in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, when it heard the female elephant's cries after it was beaten by 40 local officials in a tug-of-war. No one was killed, although some people were injured.

★ ★ ★

In the U.S., where a gunman killed 22 people in Texas recently, the House of Representatives rejected a proposed ban on semi-automatic assault weapons and large ammunition clips. One of the U.S.'s most powerful lobbying organizations, the National Rifle Association, agitated against the bill. Money makes the world go round. If not the world, then for sure, certain politicians. Remember Oliver North, the true Marine, "swear-on-the-Bible" patriot? He's making money again. His book *Under Fire* goes on sale, and in it the Colonel states that President Reagan was fully informed about the Iran-Contra Affair. Events follow each other so quickly, with such wave-like relentlessness that one has to stop and think: What was that Iran-Contra affair again?

★ ★ ★

Commonwealth nations discussed the human rights issue, while three kilometres away from the conference police tear-gassed students at the University of Zimbabwe.

★ ★ ★

Will the real Russian parliament please stand up? The Ukraine wasn't in it, and eight of the 12 republics were missing. Ukraine, claiming absolute sovereignty, will even form its own army. The Soviet Union, or whatever is left of it, has been granted a year-long reprieve on some of its foreign debts. Moscow is preparing to restore diplomatic relations with Israel. The two countries severed their relation during the 1967 war.

★ ★ ★

Not everybody in the world has turned pinko. Right-wing parties gained seats in Switzerland and Turkey. In Turkey the reigning centre-right party lost power, but the Swiss government maintained its majority. And in Louisiana a former true blooded, white-hooded, cross-burning Ku Klux Klan, nincompoop, campaigning as a Republican, defeated the incumbent governor of that state. President Bush and the whole collective U.S. Republican party are blushing in embarrassment. Chancelor Kohl, so we hope, is also embarrassed by the increasing profile of neo-Nazis in his country. It was 50 years ago that the Nazis began herding Berlin Jews into railroad cars to ship them to concentration camps.

★ ★ ★

This is about the time when children will knock on your door and say, "Trick or treat." It's also the time when writers of letters-to-the-editor treat us to religious, political and social objections to that annual event. Well, I have decided this year to make the rounds disguised as a retired minister: crippled civilian suit, shirt frayed at the cuffs, holes in my socks and the look of hunger in my eyes. I'm kidding! The Pension Fund punctually exceeds my expectations every month.

★ ★ ★

And I bet you want more of those classifieds. Here goes: "For Sale: a quilted high chair that can be made into a table, pottie chair, rocking horse, refrigerator, spring coat size B and fur collar."

OK, one more: "Dog for sale: eats anything and is fond of children."

Happy Halloween!

Carl Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and a chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.

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The Reformation uncapped the spring of living water

Reformation Day is coming again. The extent to which we may want to celebrate this day depends a lot on how important we think the events of 1517 and of following decades were.

Today I am less inclined to celebrate the formation of a Protestant church as I think of Reformation Day, and I am more and more inclined to focus on the change in the spiritual climate that the Reformation brought.

The Reformation was an important development in the life of the Church in that it shook loose some very wrong assumptions about the role of the church as institution, about the role of the clergy, about the Bible as an open or closed book, about the importance of faith as the means by which grace is taken hold of. The Reformation, one might say, made salvation more accessible.

The spring by the road

The history of the Church from Pentecost to the Reformation reminds me of a story about a spring of cool water that bubbled up near a road.

Nobody knows how or when that spring started to come to the surface. At first, travellers would stop and refresh themselves. The water was free and readily accessible. Then some people in the area realized how this spring of water could bring economic benefit and power to them. They put a fence around it and started charging travellers for a drink of water.

Pretty soon they felt that they had to do more than simply fence it in; they built a house over it. Now many travellers passed by the building without realizing that inside there was a spring of water that could refresh them. The water was used only by the villagers.

But it did not take long for fights to erupt in the village about the rights of ownership and some people were barred from the spring. They were not good enough. Eventually the spring came under the control of an elite group and the leader of this group felt that rather than waste all the water that kept on bubbling up so freely it would be better to cap the well and install a tap that could be turned off and on.

Fewer and fewer people bothered to come to the house to drink water from the well. The tap got rusty and eventually the flow of water stopped entirely.

And so the little spring that used to refresh whomever wanted to drink because he or she was thirsty was now no longer available to anyone.

Old habits die hard

What the Reformation tried to do was remove the cap and the house and the fence and make the spring of water available again to all travellers. That's the beauty of the spirit of the Reformation. But, unfortunately, churches of the Reformation did not take long to find new ways of fencing in the spring and building houses over it. Some of them tried to divert water from others. There has been a real battle going on, too, about who owns the spring.

The Reformation brought with it seeds of division and discontent. How many splits have there been since 1517?

There is something funny about church splits. In the eyes of most people there are two kinds of splits — good ones and bad ones. The good ones are the ones by which we split from another church. The bad ones are the ones by which others split from us. The average Christian Reformed person will tell you that the Reformation was good, the Secession of 1834 was good, the *Doleantie* of 1886 was good. The split in 1944 which produced the "Article 31" churches was bad and the present splits by groups or churches over the issues of the ordination of women and science and creation are also bad.

It's a weird system of evaluation based almost entirely on the subjective idea that *we* are right and *they* are wrong, whoever "we" and "they" may be. It's all a little too easy. Today I tend to see all splits as partly if not totally bad. With the poet Robert Frost I say,

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
and to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.
("Mending Wall")

Come all you who are thirsty

And in the meantime there is that spring of living water that we must uncover and make more accessible time and again. We must recapture the true spirit of the Reformation, which is the spirit that says that salvation is not the property of the instituted church or of a denomination and that the clergy are not the only dispensers.

Salvation is free, writes the prophet Isaiah: "Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!" (Isaiah 55:1). Jesus himself, while talking to the Samaritan woman, said, "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

That's the beauty of the water itself. When the spring is allowed to flow freely it causes other springs to bubble up all over. "But because of the great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph. 2: 4,5).

Let's celebrate not the divisions, not the churches and the denominations, but the free flowing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ!

BW

Letters

Menninga's quarrel is with synod, not with Spykman

In his Sept. 13, 1991, letter in C.C. [Calvin College geologist] Clarence Menninga asserts that he is not a dualist himself and neither is Howard Van Till, [author of *The Fourth Day*]. He accuses me of raising "the spectre of dualism."

But in my May 24 article to which Menninga was responding I did two things: first, I simply lifted quotations from the CRC synodical committee's report on "Creation and Science." Second, I pointed out the connections between the decisions and issues raised in *The Fourth Day* and *Science Held Hostage*. My article simply reproduced conclusions reached by the full synodical committee. It let the report and these books speak for themselves. My commentary was minimal. The synodical report holds that a dualist outlook on life is inherent in the way the idea of "categorical complementarity" functions in *The Fourth Day*. The committee said:

The Reformed understanding of the mutual inter-relationship of special and general revelation contains within it an inherent bias against any dualism which declares that areas of reality can be isolated from the impact of either general or special revelation. Although what that impact is can be determined only by faithful and patient openness to what God is saying through both revelations, the church should not hesitate to warn against any view of science which in principle rules out the influence of faith, the norms of general revelation, or the light of Scripture from scientific theorizing.

This is the judgment of the committee as a whole. And they did not regard it as a "spectre." It is all too real. At bottom, then, Menninga's quarrel is not with me but with the synodical report.

My article came across to Dr. Menninga as a personal attack. Whereas the synodical report dealt with issues, not persons, he said, my article represented an unwholesome departure from that good practice. I asked him for evidence of that "personal attack." A prolonged silence ensued. He and I then concluded that my article referred to his name just once, and that it did so only to identify him as a co-author of *Science Held Hostage*. So, once again, it was then and still is issues, not persons that are under scrutiny.

The caption to Menninga's letter read: "So quit accusing others of dualism." These words (thanks, I assume, to the C.C. staff) [who basically lifted that accusation out of Menninga's letter — Ed.] call to mind the well-worn quip, "Have you quit beating your wife yet?" The conventional answer to that rhetorical question is well-known. That answer holds here too. "I can't quit, because I haven't started." What's more, I'll make a deal. I will agree not to start, if Dr. Menninga will agree to "quit accusing me of accusing others of dualism."

Let me suggest that a top-priority agenda item for possible future dialogues should be precisely what we ought to mean by "dualism."

Gordon J. Spykman
Religion and Theology Dept.
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Focus on abilities of person

Calvinist Contact has come to be part of my regular reading. It not only helps me to keep abreast with my Canadian brothers and sisters but usually also has sensitive insights into many of our mutual concerns. The last issue was no exception until someone called my attention to a particular paragraph I had overlooked — and then I was appalled.

The paragraph in question is found in the column entitled "In and Around the Workplace" written by Ed Vanderkloet. It's the paragraph about persons with disabilities. In it the following statement appears: "Whereas competence should be the deciding factor in hiring, disabled people — precisely because they are disabled — will frequently be less competent."

This is a very unfair and misleading statement! It goes completely contrary to what we as the Committee on Disability Concerns are trying to accomplish. It may be that a person with a physical or mental limitation cannot perform a specific task, but does that justify making a sweeping statement that as a group persons with disabilities "will frequently be less competent"? I personally do not have the muscular coordination of a professional athlete. Anyone who has played golf with me will attest to that! And I am not alone. Many individuals I know would starve if they had to make their living at professional athletics. Does this mean that all of us "will frequently be less competent"?

Special gifts

The fact is that there are many individuals having disabilities — some of which are quite severe — who really excel at what they do. Sometimes their limitation may even enhance their ability. For example a computer operator who is deaf may actually be more productive than one who is capable of hearing. He or she will not be distracted by outside noises or others' conversations.

Furthermore, persons with disabilities can be outstanding employees if we are willing to provide them with "reasonable accommodations" for their situation. I know of a situation in a local setting where a stenographer who was blind was the fastest typist with the least number of errors in the whole office. She did this with a special computer that read back to her in voice.

A matter of language

I believe that part of the reason for the stereotypical view set forth by Mr. Vanderkloet can be found in the language he uses in his writing. Note for instance he speaks of "the disabled" and "disabled people." When we do this we characterize the person by their limitations and thus make them less than others.

If we instead use statements such as "a person with a disability" or "a person with a sight impairment" then we are more apt to see a person who just happens to have a disability but who also has many abilities. This is much more realistic since rarely is a disability pervasive. Although there is a tendency to characterize such language usage as splitting hairs, I truly believe that there is merit in emphasizing the value of individuals in the way we speak about them.

All this is not to say that there is not some virtue in what Mr. Vanderkloet is advocating. I believe the rights to employment of persons with disabilities must be asserted. The unemployment rate in this category is by far higher than that in any other definable segment of our society. But this is not because such individuals are less competent. It is rather because we, including Christians, see disabilities and not abilities and we would rather not be involved in dealing with someone who is different and whom we consider to be "less competent."

Rev. Ted Verseput, director
CRC Committee on Disability Concerns
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Canada is no longer one country

Charles De Gaulle may be dead, but he is alive and well in Quebec! I am afraid that De Gaulle's 1967 remarks in Montreal killed the possibility for a homogeneous Canada. Canada has never been the same! Whatever Mulroney or anyone else may try now or in the future is bound to fail.

The predicament Canada finds itself in today is perhaps the result of the battle on the Plains of Abraham. Was this battle necessary? Or even advisable? Had the French not been in Canada long before the British? Couldn't the British and the French live together as good neighbours instead of one having to conquer the other?

In 1948 when we arrived in Canada by way of Quebec we felt hostility because we were not able to speak French. Now, almost 44 years later, this hostility is 10 times worse! Do we really think that this can be settled by a contract? The contract of the past (Plains of Abraham) has not worked at all. What makes us think that another contract *will* work?

I am afraid that Canada is in the same pickle England is in with regards to Ireland: we have an unsolvable problem on our hands.

We often say that we cannot go back into history. I'm not sure about that. As an immigrant who has looked at this Canada/Quebec issue more or less from a distance, I am becoming more and more firmly convinced that for the sake of peace, for the sake of happiness in Quebec as well in the rest of Canada, we must dare to take the bull by the horns. Let's be realistic and sit down with Quebec and purposely come to an agreement as to how a separation can be accomplished in the most reasonable way.

Any other solution will prove to be only patch work.

Syrt Wolters
Victoria, B.C.

More letters on next page...

News digest

Marian Van Til

ROMANIA (WVC) — A Romanian hospital ward for HIV-positive children is being subsidized by World Vision to offset a 30 per cent government budget cut to health care. World Vision Canada is an international Christian relief and development agency supporting more than 6,000 projects in over 90 countries.

In June the government announced it would close a section of Constanta Municipal Hospital and move 60 children to its already overcrowded AIDS ward. The children might have faced premature death from exposure to infections such as measles and hepatitis, prevalent among patients in the AIDS ward. World Vision donated about $28,000 to keep the children's ward open by paying the annual salaries of 30 staff who otherwise would have been laid off this month.

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia (UNESCO Sources) — Cutting back urban boarding schools and taking education facilities to the children is one of the aims of a UNESCO project designed for Mongolia's nomad population.

The $2-million project, prepared at the request of the Mongolian government, concerns some 15,000 illiterate and semi-literate families living in the Gobi desert — 20 per cent of them headed by single women. It uses radio programs, visiting teachers and specialists, self-learning and post-literacy materials to overcome the problem of a population on the move. The Mongolian government is financing part of the project, but is also seeking outside funds.

ROME, Italy (REC) — the Italian government has decided to collect .8 per cent of Italian income taxes for churches. Taxpayers may designate the state — for humanitarian purposes, the Roman Catholic Church, the Seventh Day Adventists and the Assembly of God.

In August, the Waldensian and Methodists in their joint synod narrowly decided to apply for this privilege as well. Many delegates felt that the system brings the church too close to the state. Others felt that this gave the right freedom of choice to citizens. These churches will now seek to be added to the list of approved churches.

The synods also discussed at length the changing political situation in Europe. They debated the need for help for immigrants and refugees. No concrete resolutions were taken.

Letters

Those leaving the CRC are the faithful

Those of the readers of C.C. who have been privileged to witness God's handiwork in nature these last few weeks will agree that it is impossible to keep quiet when seeing such splendour! It reminded us of him who created the trees on what he called the third day.

There are no words I know of to express in the right way the beauty of fall in the northern part of our country. It's God's gift to us to remember him by when winter comes, I think. We came home rejoicing.

But one look at the pile of mail awaiting us quickly changed our mood. On top of the pile was C.C. with on the front page in big letters the news that the majority of the Lethbridge Christian Reformed Church voted to leave the denomination. We were already aware of such possibilities in our own classis.

There is something in this creation and science dispute that I fail to understand. When we all professed our faith we *promised* for all to hear that we would abide by what the church taught and should we believe differently, we then would submit ourselves to the discipline of the church! Simple!

But what do we see today? Those who firmly believe in an inerrant word of God leave the denomination because those who do not believe in an inerrant word of God are not being disciplined. Are we seeing, yet blind? Why are not those people [who no longer believe in an inerrant Bible] leaving us so we can stay? It is their duty.

I don't want to leave, yet I don't want to be a member of a church which doesn't believe in the Bible. What are we to do? Isn't it time to count all those who believe in the word of God? The denomination did not change — those few church members did.

Let's stay together; we are then so much stronger to fight off this evil, with the help of God. I beg those who cause all this trouble to please leave and form their own church.

Gertie Wagenaar
Stoney Creek, Ont.

THE CONSULATE-GENERAL WOULD LIKE TO COME IN CONTACT WITH THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:

BAKKER, Mevr. B.A.H., born 6 October 1945, last known address: 404 Lake Drive South, Keswick, Ontario L4P 1P1

CECOTKA, Stefan, born 3 August 1926, immigrated to Canada on 25 March 1960.

CORDROMP, Robbie, born 10 June 1944, immigrated to Canada on 19 June 1989

KUIN, R.P.J., born 10 February 1941, last known address: 64 Wilson Park Road, Toronto, Ont.

LAPONDER, Dirk A., born 15 April 1962, last known place of residence in the Netherlands: Lingewaal,24 August 1987.

LIEUW-ON, Edmund Carlo, born 16 September 1959, immigrated to Canada on 17 May 1991.

OOSTERMAN, Johannes Petrus Josephus, born 27 May 1926, last place of residence: Amsterdam, immigrated to Canada on 23 April 1957, destination: Vancouver, B.C.

van der PLAS, A.D. born 31 March 1928, having served in the Army in Suriname in 1950.

RIETVELD, Gerrit, born 4 November 1930, immigrated to Canada on 17 July 1953

de RIJK, Willem Alphonso, born 24 July 1909 in Soerabaya, immigrated to Canada on 23 January 1958.

VIS, Roelof, born 17 March 19??, immigrated to Canada on 30 March 1949

VELDHUIZEN, Laurens, born 22 February 1927 in Amersfoort, last known address in the Netherlands: Miereveldstraat 9, Amersfoort, immigrated to Canada on 20 May 1955.

van WIJK, Jan Hendrik, born 18 June 1915, last place of residence: Winterswijk, immigrated to Canada on 4 June 1953.

CONSULATE-GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS
1 DUNDAS ST.WEST, SUITE # 2106,
BOX 2
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M5G 1Z3
PHONE: (416) 598-2520
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Something to look forward to amidst controversy

Thanks for making us look forward to every issue of C.C. We know that Christmas is still a good many weeks away, but we have decided to give our children a subscription to your paper. Please find our cheque enclosed, and keep serving us and many others in the interesting and stimulating way in which you are so capable.

By the way, although your observation that there was so little evidence of true sadness at the special meeting of Classis Niagara may be correct, we want you to know that *we* are still grieving over what happened. It was a most disturbing experience! Finally, your readers should know that it was the councils of the Providence Christian Reformed Church of Beamsville, Ont., and Jubilee Fellowship CRC, St. Catharines, who wrote this excellent report that argues for a unity of the faith that is both scriptural and realistic.

God bless you in your ministry to us all.

Peter and Anne DeBruyne
Grimsby, Ont.

Many publishers are in trouble

Regarding your editorial on declining readership, you are right; but it is a problem for so many publishers. People will cheerfully pay $250 for a sports event, but not a tenth of that amount for a book or monthly magazine. Lately, out of 10 manuscripts that I sent out at least one has come back with the comment: "No longer publishing" or "Publications on hold for the time being."

Read the following letter I got from Abbey Press:

Abbey Press, the religious gift marketer and publisher of CareNotes *and other pastoral and spiritual resources announces that its monthly magazine,* marriage & family, *has* ***ceased publication with its final issue in*** *August 1991. "Declining* ***circulation, unsatisfactory renewal rates, postal increases, and low advertising revenues*** *have contributed to the decision," says father Keith McClellan, O.S.B., publisher of the monthly periodical. "More decisive, however, are the significant cultural factors that have changed reading habits and multiplied the special needs and interests of modern couples and families.*

"The diverse audience represented by two-income households, 'traditional' families, broken and blended families, single-parent families, interfaith marriages, and other factors pose a breadth of issues that are difficult to handle adequately in our existing general interest magazine format," adds Fr. Keith.

Lini R. Grol
Fonthill, Ont.

ROOFTOP MUSINGS/ALYCE OOSTERHUIS

Recognition: why do we need it?

It had been a wonderful Sunday afternoon service. The sermon on the fourth day of creation had been compassionate, healing and inspirational. In the closing congregational prayer the minister prayed for all those who teach in Christian institutions of higher learning because they have to struggle with biblical insights to the myriad mysteries in God's universe. The minister placed before God's ears the names of all those in the congregation who are involved in such teaching and concluded with the usual Amen. I sat stunned and aching because my name had not been placed in that list. I could understand why, in the passion of prayer, my name had not surfaced to his consciousness, but it hurt nonetheless.

I went home and told my husband "I know we should not be petty, but this is one time when my need to be petty outweighs the 'shoulds' of being generous." We talked a long time about recognition — how it is used to build up self-esteem; that it needs to be given spontaneously; why it cannot be demanded if we do not wish to be like the Pharisee.

God-like or fallen?

Since that time I have thought long and hard about our human need for recognition: is it an aspect of our image-bearing natures? or is it an aspect of our fallenness? Does God ever demand recognition? Christ requested anonymity very often after performing miracles, and yet he did ask, "Whom do you say that I am?" He did embrace the thief on the cross who recognized him (without solicitation) as the Son of God.

I have a sociologist friend who has spent the last 10 years of her life working on a dissertation that deals with appreciation — a more emotional word (to me) than its formal equivalent of recognition. And yet the two words are inextricably bound together. Failure to be recognized leads to feelings of depreciation; being recognized leads to feelings of being appreciated. Recognitions and, hence, appreciation are an integral aspect of volunteer work.

It leads us to bestow pins, plaques and badges on those who have given themselves without the usual monetary payments. It causes us to establish awards for the mother of the year and the heroes who risked their lives to save others in distress. Many sociologists will confirm that without such occasional moments of recognition our pool of volunteers would dry up. And psychologists will admit that such moments are like the stroking of our backbones, without which our bodies appear to become shrivelled up.

Does being paid preclude it?

But what about those of us who are paid to do what we are doing, who are expected to be competent professionals in that for which we have been trained or gifted to do? My self esteem is not dependent upon others' recognition or appreciation at this point in my life. I hope I have grown beyond that adolescent phase of others' approval for self-identification.

But if *I* felt hurt by such an essentially "petty" omission, how much more must not those whom we regularly omit to recognize be hurt and begin to feel depreciated? How would God feel if we never thanked him or acknowledged his presence in our lives? How would Christ have felt if there had been no thief on the cross who recognized his divine suffering and calling in that moment of hell?

I have not sorted out the answers yet. Maybe when my friend finally finishes her dissertation there will be some clarity. In the meantime, if it should ever happen again in a congregational prayer that someone is omitted from the list of those who need an extra dosage of grace in their lives, I will be tempted to stand up after the Amen to append a P.S. to the Lord.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis is assistant professor of education and psychology at the King's College in Edmonton.

Music/Media

Major evangelical radio station in Haiti off the air

PORT-AU-PRINCE (EP) — Radio Lumiere, a major evangelical broadcasting system in Haiti, went off the air October 4 after its AM studio in downtown Port-au-Prince came under military fire, according to a report from World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).

After the AM broadcast went silent the FM/stereo studio on the north side of the city broadcast news of the shutdown and then voluntarily went off the air as well to lessen the likelihood of destruction of that facility.

No radio personnel, either national or missionary, have been harmed in the attack or in any of the recent unrest in Haiti, said Pat Shingledecker, who added in a telephone interview that the United States Embassy had just warned her that the military forces that staged the coup were looking for her husband, Paul, the station's director of administration.

The AM station was ransacked in the attack and a posted guard fled, although two operators who remained in the studio were unharmed. The soldiers broke into an upstairs apartment where a missionary family lived, and while they did not harm anyone there they slammed a two-way radio against a wall several times and then shot it.

The violence at the Radio Lumiere studio came after hours of what onlookers described as pitched battles in that section of the city between those who staged the coup and those who resisted it.

Radio Lumiere was launched by World Team, and is operated by the *Mission Evangelique Baptist du Sud d'Haiti*. It is affiliated with the Council of Evangelical Churches in Haiti.

First Kikongo language Christian programs broadcast

QUITO, Ecuador (EP) — People in western Africa who speak the Kikongo language can now, for the first time, hear Gospel radio broadcasts in their own language, according to HCJB (Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessing), a missionary world radio organization.

Radio station HCJB in Quito, Ecuador, began airing Kikongo programs Sept. 16. "I'm hoping that these broadcasts will mean many people can hear the Gospel for the first time," says Barb Cline, wife of HCJB World Radio President Ron Cline, who spent the last three years seeking opportunies to develop Kikongo broadcasts. "These programs will also help nurture the Christians who understand this language." Most of the 3.2 million Kikongo speaking people live in communities scattered throughout Angola, Congo and Zaire. Programs are broadcast from HCJB's shortwave transmitters in Ecuador, five days a week on three frequencies. Programs will be produced by Vita Niosi, 33, an Angolan man who emigrated to Australia after communists gained control of his native country in 1975. Niosi met the Clines when they visited his church in Melbourne, Australia, earlier this year.

The Clines, who had been praying for three years that the Lord would provide a Kikongo-speaking person for the project, approached him and invited him to help with the broadcasts. "I've never told anyone this before," Niosi told the Clines, "but I've always dreamed that I would be in missionary radio."

Loreena McKennit: *The Visit*

Bill Fledderus
Quinlan Road; distributed by WEA, 1991.

Loreena McKennit is a Stratford, Ont., vocalist/harpist working within the Irish folk music tradition. Hearing her reinterpretations of traditional ballads can cause listeners to close their eyes and imagine themselves across the Atlantic in a romantic, rural Irish landscape. Her own compositions are often in much the same vein as the traditional ballads.

McKennit's singing voice is clear and powerful in all parts of her range, and comparisons with Enya's soaring soprano come quickly to mind (Enya is well-known for her 1988 release *Watermark* and for her earlier work with the Celtic-influenced group Clannad). McKennit's singing conveys poignant emotion; her music creates a sometimes rustic, mystical atmosphere. She herself plays Celtic harp, keyboards and various other instruments on most of the tracks.

McKennit is an English literature student's dream come true, for she puts poetry to music — Shakespeare's "Cymbeline" and Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" are just two of the delights on this latest recording, McKennit's fourth. Her earlier recordings have included Charles Dickens, W.B. Yeats, and, of course, the anonymous poets of traditional Irish ballads and songs.

The Visit refers to the creative impulse, according to McKennit, "a thing of grace, not commanded or owned so much as awaited, prepared for. A thing, also, of mystery." It also refers to life itself, as seen by the Celts, "a visit [after which] one's soul might move to another plane, or another form — perhaps a tree. The Celts knew then, as we are re-learning now, a deep respect for all the life around them."

Christians captivated by McKennit's music may find their appreciation for her marred by what might seem "new-age" musings about reincarnation and by her affinity with Yeats and pagan Celtic culture.

Yet it would not be fair, without further evidence, to label her a "pagan" or "new-ager." McKennit is a Celtic revivalist, someone interested in and fiercely proud of her people's "old ways" in the same way as our aboriginal peoples and perhaps some Calvinists are proud of their roots and identify themselves through them. The Celtic tradition is a rich one, but to reject all of it for the religious orientation which pervades it would be a shame.

In the meantime, as McKennit is now touring small Canadian venues, music lovers should consider themselves challenged to go and see for themselves.

'Back to God Hour' the only Christian programming to air on Soviet National Radio and TV

PALOS HEIGHTS, Ill. (BTGH) — The Back to God Hour, the international broadcast voice of the Christian Reformed Church, feels it has the potential to play an historic role in the spiritual reawakening of the Soviet Union when, on Nov. 1, 1991, its Russian language *Vozvrashcheniye k Bogu* broadcast begins airing weekly over Soviet National Radio.

This agreement comes on the heels of an agreement with Soviet National Television, which was announced in early September. The new *Vozvrashcheniye k Bogu* telecast, which shares its name with the popular Back to God Hour Russian language radio broadcast, will be carried twice a month. The contract includes an option for the program to air weekly.

This is the first time in the history of the Soviet Union that any Christian broadcast from the West will be transmitted via Soviet National Radio and/or Television. The historic contracts were negotiated and signed by Mikhail Morgulis, The Back to God Hour's Russian language speaker.

According to Dr. Joel Nederhood, director of ministries at The Back to God Hour, Moldavian Radio and Television have also agreed to carry the *Vozvrashcheniye k Bogu* programs once a week.

Soviet National Radio has a potential listening audience of 200-210 million people throughout all the Soviet republics. The television audience within Soviet territory is estimated to number between 75 and 100 million viewers.

16 competed, only one chosen

According to Morgulis, The Back to God Hour faced formidable competition in getting its programs placed on Soviet National Radio and TV. "Sixteen Christian agencies in the West submitted proposals, but of those proposals, only The Back to God Hour's Russian language programs were chosen."

"Anatoly Pupikin, general president of Soviet National Radio, told me that in The Back to God Hour he and other selection committee members found the highest level of production for their people in this new day in Soviet history," relates Morgulis, who returned to the U.S. in late September after a 20-day visit to the U.S.S.R. "Pupikin added that The Back to God Hour's Russian language programming displayed the highest quality in both its spiritual message and literary style."

Vozvrashcheniye k Bogu (Return to God), the Russian radio broadcast of The Back to God Hour, will continue to be beamed into the Soviet Union via Trans World Radio, FEBC and Family Radio.

"It's a new day in the Soviet Union," continues an ebullient Morgulis, who was born and raised in the Soviet republic of Ukraine. "It is a Soviet Union which is no longer officially Communist but whose majority of people retain a Communist mentality. We must seek to change that mentality, to reawaken them spiritually.

"Now is a critical time for The Back to God Hour — for all Christian mission organizations — to be dynamic, to be bold. We must not be afraid to move forward."

During his stay in the U.S.S.R., Morgulis worked closely with Dr. Vladimir Zots, ad advisor to President Mikhail Gorbachev on matters of culture and religion, as well as with other aides to both the Soviet President and to Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

"When we consider our potential listening and viewing audiences now that these Back to God Hour Russian language programs will be on the Soviet National networks, I thank God for his goodness toward our ministry and ask his guidance and continued blessings," says Dr. Nederhood.

"In light of recent developments within the Soviet Union, I request the prayers of Christians throughout North America for the Soviet people and for the *Vozvrashcheniye k Bogu* broadcast ministries, that the message of peace in christ may continue to enter the hearts of millions throughout that land," he concluded. "And I ask for the prayerful support of the Christian Reformed Church as we move boldly through the doors which God has opened to our ministry."

Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Regina church family camp focuses on change

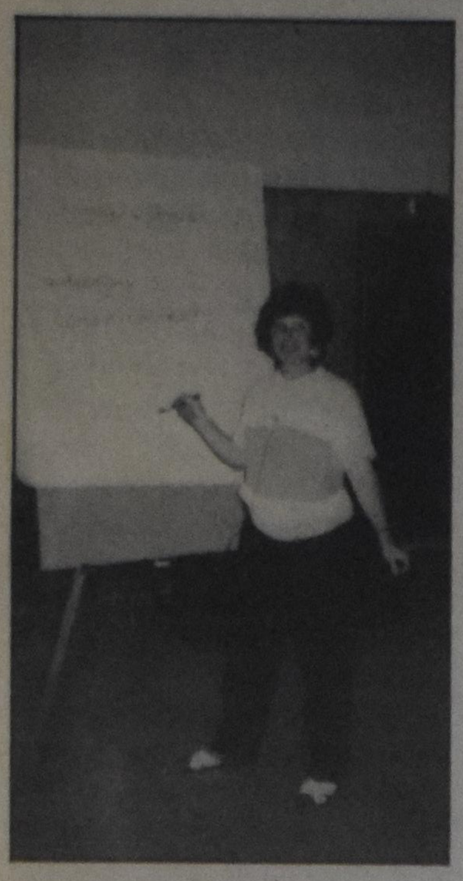


Photo: courtesy Angela Terpstra

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis challenges men and women to be true partners.

Angela Terpstra

REGINA — Members of the First (and only) Christian Reformed Church of Regina recently held their annual church camp using the theme "Living in Harmony." The event takes place every year on the Labour Day weekend at Katepwa Baptist Camp in the Qu'Appele Valley of Saskatchewan. First church is only one of the two Christian Reformed congregations in the province, the other being Bethel, Saskatoon.

Most of the congregation join in the camp from Saturday morning until Monday afternoon. While the adults and young people participate in the main sessions, children from three to 14 years old can also attend a variety of programs. As well, many families can canoe, water ski, swim or hike along the hills.

The guest speaker for this year's camp was Dr. Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis, an educational psychologist who teaches at The King's College in Edmonton. She examined changes in relationships as lives mature. She highlighted the interpersonal skills needed to make these changes happily.

In discussing family relationships Oosterhuis showed that "complementarity" (as outlined by Dr. Mary Stewart-Van Leeuwen in *Gender and Grace*) is perhaps one of the best ways to relate. Complementarity means relating in partnership. People have to be parents and partners more self-consciously, said Oosterhuis. Instead of thinking in terms of hierarchies of power people need to find new ways to express each person's strengths.

The congregation, including lots of kids, starts gathering to do some singing.

Photo: courtesy Angela Terpstra

The session concluded with a discussion of the need for joy in relationships. This joy can best be achieved when people *mutually* decide the rules and tasks for the family, the workplace and society. Ultimately people should grow and change with each other.

By bringing together young and mature people, new and old members, the camp helped First CRC along the way to doing just that.

Australian Reformed debate women in office and gifts of the spirit

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — The Reformed Churches of Australia debated a report on women in church office, but decided to take no action now. The RCA synod meeting in August received a report recommending that the offices continue to be restricted to men only. After a lengthy and lively debate, the report was returned to the committee for re-working.

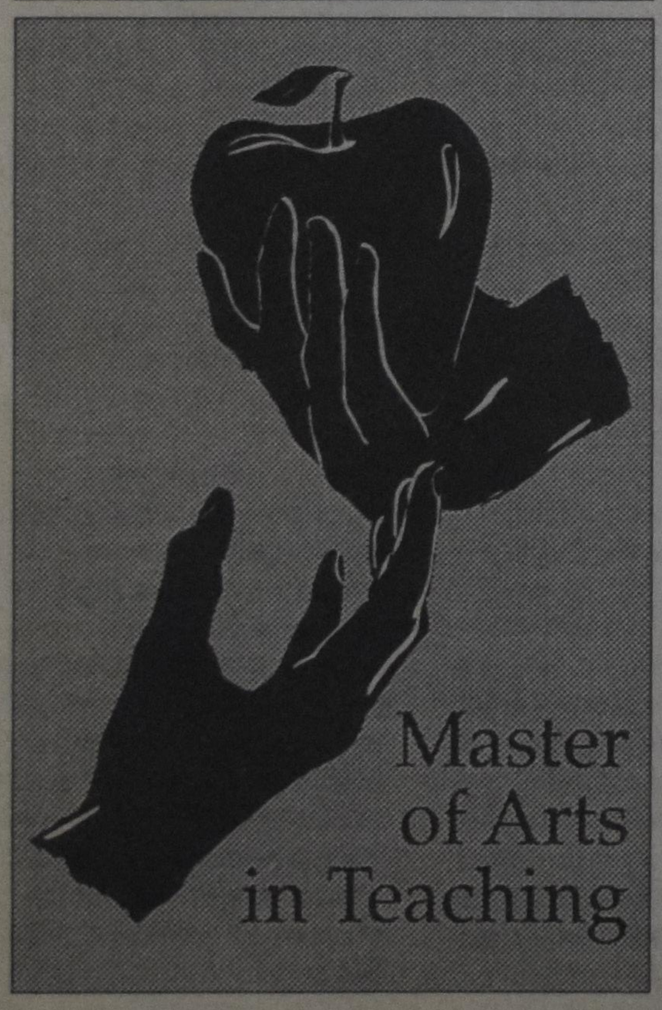
Charismatic influences around them caused the RCA to consider the presence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They considered the position developed by the Presbyterian theologian B.B. Warfield that the gifts of the Spirit were limited to the apostolic age. The synod, however, could not agree with this conclusion.

Does God ever speak today apart from the Scriptures, the synod asked? The synodical delegates confirmed the authority, sufficiency and normativity of Scripture, but still left room for God to communicate with us through the gift of prophecy, "particularly in situations where the written Word of God is unavailable."

The synod also dealt with divorce and remarriage. it noted there was no procedure in the Bible for dealing with individual cases. It said the aim of pastoral care is to restore people to the community, not to exclude them with legalistic judgments. Restoration only comes with repentance and forgiveness, the synod emphasized. When these are not present, couples must be dealt with accordingly.

The synod was also presented with a book commemorating the 40th anniversary of the church. *A Church En Route* contains more than 400 pictures and many stories of the families that founded this group of churches. The book is available for A$39.

Calvin College Graduate Studies



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It's not a miracle

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — When the clotted blood of St. Januarius turns to liquid, the people of Naples, Italy, believe that good luck is due. But scientists writing in the Oct. 10 issue of *nature* magazine say the medieval mystery may be the work of simple chemistry, rather than divine intervention.

Scientists say they have created a dark brown gel that turns to a liquid when it is disturbed, then thickens and returns to a gel state. They speculate that a similar mixture may be in the vial that is believed to hold the blood of St. Januarius, also called San Gennaro, in the Roman Catholic cathedral of Naples.

Since the 14th century, a ceremony has been performed in which a hermetically sealed 4-inch-long glass container is agitated. Some Neapolitans believe it is a sign of good luck if the contents of the vial liquefy; if the contents remain solid disasters such as earthquakes are expected.

The researchers say the event "draws crowds of thousands and a television and media audience of millions." They wrote, "The phenomenon seems genuine, is well documented and is still regarded as unexplained." A researcher who has observed the ceremony said the substance in the vial looks like the gel he and his colleagues created.

The experimental gel was created with substances which were available in the 14th century, such as salt, water, ferric chloride hydrate and calcium carbonate. When the mixture is disturbed, it liquefies, researchers say.

A team of researchers who examined the vial in 1989 said it appeared to contain blood. They based their conclusions on a test in which they analyzed light shown through the vial.

The Vatican has not classified the liquefaction as a miracle.

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Al Wolters

Adding to God's Word

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person plagues described in this book" (Rev. 22: 18, NRSV).

It is appropriate that one of the very last verses in the Bible should be this solemn warning against adding anything to the words of written prophecy. When it comes to Scripture, which we believe is inspired by the Spirit of God, we may neither addd nor substract.

Ironically, however, the translation of the verse which I have just quoted does just that. If you check other versions of the Bible you will note that the words "that person" do not occur. Instead, you will find the word "him" or its equivalent, which faithfully reflects the Greek *auton* at this point.

The New Revised Standard Version

This example illustrates one of the distinguishing features of the New Revised Standard Version, which was first published last year. This is the first Bible translation which fairly consistently makes a point of using inclusive language. It does not always do so, and it does not take the further step of avoiding masculine pronouns when referring to God, but it does have the general policy of avoiding language which many today would call sexist.

To a limited extent, this policy can be justified in terms of the original languages. For example, the Hebrew word *adam* and the Greek word *anthropos* are generic in their meaning, like German *Mensch* or Dutch *mens*, and it can sometimes be misleading to translate them as "man." In most cases, however, the changes in the direction of more inclusive language that we find in the NRSV have no justification in the Hebrew and Greek original of the Bible. As a matter of fact, if the use of masculine forms in a generic sense constitutes sexist language, then the Bible is even more sexist in the original than it is in the standard English translations. In the quoted verse, for example, the words usually rendered "every one" or "any one" really reflect a masculine form in the Greek.

There is something paradoxical about all of this. In a time when Bible translators generally try to avoid letting their confessional differences influence their work and strive to be as objective as possible in doing justice to the original, we have a new version of the Bible which allows contemporary ideology to be more decisive than faithfulness to the text.

Twisting Scripture

It is one thing to be in favour of inclusive language in contemporary writing (though here too there is an ideological background that we ignore at our peril), but it is something else to force the language of Scripture to conform to our own preferences. On that score, the NRSV is guilty of what the Bible itself calls "twisting" or "distorting" Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).

I suspect that in many denominations there is already considerable pressure to give an officially approved status to the NRSV, and that in many other denominations that pressure will be manifest before long. I think that pressure should be strongly resisted. We must accept the Bible as it is and not try to tailor it to our own ideas of right and wrong.

There is much about the Bible that modern people find offensive, indeed scandalous. The way the New Testament, for example speaks about the Jews, or the wrath of God, or Christ's atonement, or husband-wife relations meet with deep resistance in many people today. The temptation is great, as it has been in every age, to accommodate the teaching of Scripture to the prevailing winds of doctrine. But the church stands or falls with its confession that the Scriptures are God's own words to us, with a divine authority that is far greater than that of any human philosophy or ideology, We dare not add to it or subtract from it, for fear of incurring "the plagues described in this book."

Al Wolters teaches religion/theology and classical languages at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Mission Church questions Dutch Reformed support from South African government

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Recently the South African government admitted it had financially supported a black political movement, Inkatha. After this revelation, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) wondered whether the largely white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) had ever received any financial support for their opposition to sanctions. The Mission Church sent a letter to the DRC requesting information and noting that they wished to keep the matter private. They also wanted a quick reply, namely yes or no within 24 hours.

In reply, the DRC moderator Pieter Potgieter asked the Mission Church about three points. Did they wish to know whether any department of government had ever given financial or other advantage to the DRC for its position against sanctions? Was the question of finances raised when the DRC spoke with Buthelezi, the head of Inkatha? And thirdly was the DRC aware of any secret funds for anti-sanction projects, which they may have heard of because of their frequent contacts with the government?

The DRC further requested that a formal answer be given after the meeting of the executive committee *(dagbestuur)* of its general synodical commission on August 12. At that meeting a reply to the DRMC request was drafted.

No, but....

The DRC replied that it understood the question of the Mission Church to be: Has the DRC had any improper dealings with the present government for the furtherance of a particular perception or policy. The DRC letter said, "To this the answer is an unequivocal no." The committee further replied that it was unwilling to be drawn further into a debate with charges and denials. The Mission Church may apply to the government for more information, according to the letter.

The DRC letter addressed in addition the suspicion about their relationship with Inkatha. They said the meeting with Buthelezi had been scheduled months before the scandal about secret funds was revealed. The conversation was part of a series of talks in which the executive committee was involved.

The committee further declared that the government has never, to their knowledge, ever approached the DRC about the management of any anti-sanctions project.

Legitimate disappointment or self-righteousness?

The DRC expressed its disappointment with the form of the Mission Church letter. They said that it was in the form of an ultimatum and revealed a basic distrust of the DRC. It implied that the Mission Church strongly suspected secret funds had been given to the DRC.

P.J.A. Fourie, the editor of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church's magazine *Die Ligdraer*, expressed his dissatisfaction with this reply in his September editorial. The DRC denied any payment from this government, that is, the government of F.W. De Klerk, but that was not the question, he wrote. The question was, has the DRC ever received in the past financial help for church projects — projects that also would benefit the government. Fourie wrote that, unless there was a clear answer to this question, suspicion would remain and would hinder the co-operation between the two churches that was beginning to develop.

Lausanne Committee focuses on Eastern Europe

BUDAPEST (REC) — The 80-member Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization met in Budapest in September. This was their first meeting since the worldwide Lausanne II Congress in Manila in 1989. The committee used the occasion to draw another hundred people together for the Budapest Summit, a meeting to discuss evangelization strategies in Eastern Europe.

The collapse of communism has fostered nationalism and the return of many national churches. Peter Kuzmic of Yugoslavia warned that civil war such as Yugoslavia's is also a danger in many of the new republics emerging from the former Soviet Union.

One of the main problems is lack of literature in languages other than Russian. One summit report said that people in the newly independent republics do not want the Gospel in the language of their former oppressors. Agencies that have been working at identifying people groups have sometimes made preparations for this.

Many European leaders lamented the short-lived enthusiasm that Western Christians were bringing east. So far, they said, most Christians in the region believe they have had little help from the West, except some literature.

Swaggart steps down (again) from ministry after being caught with prostitute

COACHELLA VALLEY, Calif. (EP) — Evangelist Jimmy Swaggart, who temporarily stepped down from his ministry in 1988 after admitting to "moral failure" involving a prostitute, has stepped down again. Swaggart temporarily relinquished leadership of his ministry after allegedly being caught with a prostitute in his car.

Swaggart was in the company of Rosemary Garcia when he was stopped for driving on the wrong side of the road, driving an unregistered vehicle, and failure to wear a seat belt.

Garcia, 31, told television news crews that Swaggart had picked her up "for a date," and explained, "For sex. I mean, that's why he stopped me. That's what I do. I'm a prostitute."

Garcia said she did not recognize Swaggart when he picked her up, because the evangelist was disguised. She said that when he noticed a police car he began driving erratically while trying to hide some magazines he had with him.

Swaggart's son Donnie said he will head Jimmy Swaggart Ministries while his father seeks professional counselling and medical attention. The younger Swaggart said that after "a time of healing and counselling....Dad will once again assume the pulpit."

Reformation Day

John Calvin: 'Prince' or tyrant?

Calvin conferring with the Geneva council. Photo: RNS

Marian Van Til

What does the name "John Calvin" conjure up? To those not a part of the tradition named after him, nothing very good, apparently (see Bert Witvoet's article, p. 11, "Should You Be Afraid of Calvinists?"). If people have heard of him at all, they seem to have some vague notion about some long-dead, tyrannical religious maniac who was one of the world's greatest killjoys.

Having grown up in a self-consciously "Calvinist" family, I was imparted with a reasonably positive view of Calvin. But I admit to having had some misgivings for a long time now about Calvin the man.

Just what was Calvin like, not just as a thinker and theologian, but as a flesh and blood *human being*? Do all the differences of opinion about the relative merits of Calvinism somehow have something to do with the man himself, provoking that centuries-long negative image? Or is all that just "disinformation" spouted by people with vested interests or axes to grind? I decided that the 474th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation might be a good time to try to find some answers.

Who was that masked man?

The first thing I found out is that definitive answers are hard to come by. As one writer pointed out, biographies of Calvin have not really solved the problem of who he was or what he was like. In fact, Lutheran author Kurt Aland contends in *Four Reformers* (Augsburg, 1979) that from Calvin's own time onward, "there is no extensive biography that can command universal acceptance on the strength of its objectivity and knowledge of the subject. The critics of Calvin — from Bolsec in the 16th century to Kampschulte at the close of the 19th — have had more success than his defenders...." Though a rash of books about Calvin have appeared in the last couple of years, the situation has been alleviated only somewhat since Aland wrote that statement.

Vast amounts of *personal* information are not available about Calvin — he was not prone to setting down many facts about himself, much less his feelings. But what emerges from the accounts we do have (based on my admittedly limited research) is this: a fascinating and sometimes repugnant picture of a thoroughly committed and devout — but driven — man.

A very different time

It becomes immediately obvious when digging into the life of a personage removed from our own time by more than 400 years that you *must* bridge that huge historical chasm. To evaluate a famous (or infamous) 16th-century figure according to late-20th-century sensibilities is to invite the creation of a distorted picture indeed. That is not to say that some events and actions which we today would regard as despicable are *not* despicable when performed by men of God like Calvin and his colleagues — the burning at the stake of Servetus, for example (to which we will return later). But ignoring historical contexts always twists the resulting images.

To what degree do a person's attitudes, philosophical thought and religious commitment stem from — or affect — his or her personality? That's a question that scholars debate, but one thing is sure: Calvin the Reformer was not merely a disembodied mind, and his theology cannot be seen wholly apart from what kind of person he was and from the experiences that shaped him.

One such early experience was the death of his mother four or five years after his birth in 1509 in Noyen, France (we Dutch Calvinists who have so firmly adopted "Johannes Calvijn" tend to forget that "Jean Calvin" was French, and thoroughly so). Shortly after his mother's death, the child was packed off by his father — who held a position of some responsibility in the local (Catholic) cathedral — to live with a noble family, the Montmors, to begin his education.

At age 12 Jean was sent by his father to the University of Paris to study for the priesthood. By the time Jean was 20, the elder Calvin decided his son should be a lawyer instead of a priest because lawyers made more money (this by Jean's own account). Calvin finished the arts course, obtained a masters degree and then worked on a law degree between 1528 and 1533. Meanwhile, he had been attracted to what William Bouwsma in *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (Oxford, 1988) calls "the novel evangelical humanism" of Erasmus. Calvin continued his humanistic studies and in 1532 published his first written work, an edition with learned commentary of Seneca's essay on clemency. He later reported a conversion to Protestantism and was, before he developed his own theological emphasis, assumed to be a follower of Luther, whom he openly admired.

No father figure

William Bouwsma makes some intriguing observations about Calvin and his relationship to his parents, a topic the writer believes "seems worth more attention than it has generally received."

Bouwsma points out Calvin's life-long preoccupation with exile (into which he fled several times) and his great and continued longing for France, his native land.

"The death of his mother when he was a small child and his subsequent exclusion from his father's household may have begun in him a sense of homelessness that would be later deepened by exile," writes Bouwsma. "He grieved for his motherland all his life. The loss of mother and home may also have been an element in what seems to me his undeniably ambiguous feeling about his father, a matter of particular moment for one whose thought depended so heavily on the understanding of fatherhood.

"Sixteenth century sons did not commonly denounce their fathers, nor did Calvin express directly any antagonism to his," continues Bouwsma. But though Calvin's letters show his affection for the Montmor family who had raised him (even though his father had remarried), he expresses no such warmth for his father. On the contrary, the coldness with which he relates his father's imminent death to a friend "made it seem little more than an unwelcome interruption to the cultivation of his friends," contends Bouwsma.

Calvin's experience of abandonment and exile, it seems, contributed to his understanding of the Gospel as a haven for the dispossessed, a refuge for those quite literally alienated.

Arranged marriage

When Calvin married at age 31 it was an arranged union, arranged in fact by his greatest spiritual mentor, Martin Bucer. Such marriages, of course, were not uncommon, but they were normally orchestrated by one's father. It's clear that for Calvin, Bucer had become the father the Reformer never really had.

Though Calvin himself said that he had "never taken a wife" and he did not know "if [he] would ever marry," Bucer took upon himself the responsibility of finding Jean a wife. Considering the comments Calvin made about the matter, the kind of life he led in scholarly-churchly circles, and the lack of female influence in his life, it doesn't take a great leap of imagination to conclude that Calvin knew little or nothing about women and was undoubtedly fearful at the thought of marrying.

He did not, in fact, warm to Bucer's "blind dates" at first, though he did acknowledge from a purely practical (and from our vantage point, an inequitable) point of view that if he were to marry it "would be to free himself from trivial worries so that I could devote myself to the Lord."

Bouwsma concludes that Calvin's early statements about marriage "were rather theoretical, even priggish, and certainly naive." To his other mentor, Guillaume Farel, he wrote, "I am none of those insane lovers who embrace even vices, once they have been overcome by a fine figure. The only beauty that attracts me is this: if she is modest, accommodating, not haughty, frugal, patient, and there is hope she will be concerned about my health."

"These righteous abstractions," says Bouwsma, "may have disguised a good deal of anxiety; and although Bucer seemed to him right in principle, Calvin was in no hurry to marry and rejected the first choices of his friend." What Calvin thought was required of himself as a good husband is not known.

A good idea after all

As it turned out, Calvin finally accepted one of Bucer's arrangements, marrying Idelette deBure, a widow whose Anabaptist husband Calvin had helped "convert." Happily, Jean came to love Idelette very deeply, and she him. When she died only nine years later (after bearing three children, none of whom survived to adulthood), Calvin was absolutely distraught. She had become not only the love of his life, but his best and most intimate friend.

Expressing grief in an open manner or for any length of time, however, was not a part of that era. In an age plagued with the most crude medical care, high infant mortality and all manner of diseases which could snuff out a life at any time, people could not afford to be sentimental about death, even in the family.

But in an unusually personal letter to a friend, Calvin reveals not only the depth of his grief for Idelette (and an almost surprising sensitivity) but what a strong and courageous women of faith she was, (supporting Bucer's judgment of her fine character):

Although the death of my wife has been bitterly painful to me, yet I restrain my grief as well as I can .... You know well enough how tender, or rather soft, my mind is. Had I not exercised a powerful self-control, therefore, I could not have borne up so long. And truly mine is no common grief. I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life, who, if any severe hardship had occurred, would have been my willing partner, not only in exile and poverty but even in death. As long as she lived she was the faithful helper of my ministry. From her I never felt

Continued on p. 15....

Should you be afraid of Calvinists?

Bert Witvoet

In my editorial of Oct. 18 I wrote that I had developed a somewhat popular explanation of Calvinism at the request of my son. He wanted such a statement to explain to his fellow workers what Calvinism is. At this time I am sharing the first fruits of my labour with you. The Reformation Day issue seems to be the right place for it. Please remember, this is not a finished document. I have asked a few people to critique the statement and make suggestions for improvement. Some of these have come in; others are still coming. I would, however, be open to receiving any other suggestions from our readers.

Most people in North America don't know much if anything about Calvinism. The reason may be that there are few visible signs around to indicate that Calvinism is still a vital faith expression or mindset. Most Calvinist churches have "Presbyterian" or "Reformed" somewhere in their name, but fail to make any reference to Calvinism. Some Calvinist schools honour John Calvin in their name, but most do not. Many Calvinistic endeavours have been placed under the more general banner of "Christian," as in the Christian Labour Association of Canada, or lack a clearly confessional label as in the Association for Public Justice in the United States. So it is understandable that those who do not make the necessary connections between Calvinism and its social expressions do not learn much about Calvinism.

The scarcity of information and knowledge has not kept some people from harbouring some pretty strong notions about Calvinism, however. Some of these notions are positive, as in "Calvinists are honest and hardworking people"; some of them are negative, as in "He came from a strict Calvinistic background." What do *you* know about Calvinism? What do you *want* to know about it? Have you ever heard of the joy of Calvinism? Or is that an oxymoron?

If you have the time and inclination to read the following, you may learn something about Calvinism that will stand you in good stead should you ever meet one of those strange creatures called a Calvinist. You may call this a little catechism on Calvinism, to stay within the jargon of a theological stream that holds religious teaching very high.

It started with John Calvin

Calvinism is a branch of Protestantism, which is a limb of the tree we call Christianity. The Protestant Reformation took place in the 16th century in Western Europe, the area where the Roman Catholic Church had taken a firm hold. In Eastern Europe the Greek Orthodox Church prevailed.

Calvinism began with John Calvin, a reformer who was born in France in 1509 and who worked as a pastor and theologian in Geneva, Switzerland, until his death in 1564. The influence of his teachings was felt especially in countries like Switzerland, the Netherlands, England, Scotland and Hungary. Calvin's French followers were called Huguenots and his English followers were called Puritans. Lutheranism, another branch of the Reformation, had originated a few years earlier (1517) with the German monk Martin Luther and spread throughout Germany and into the Scandinavian countries. Roman Catholicism was not seriously threatened in Southern Europe. Countries like France, Spain, Portugal and Italy remained largely Catholic. Eventually all branches of the Christian faith spread to other parts of the world.

The protest of the Reformation

What John Calvin had in common with other reformers is that he protested (hence the name Protestant) against many of the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. The reformers strongly denounced the power structure of the Roman hierarchy. They taught that the believer stood in direct relationship to God and did not require the mediating office of priests, bishops, pope and saints. They argued that all believers are priests and Jesus is the only mediator (go-between) needed to link the believer and God the Father.

The form of church government that Calvin proposed as a substitute for the hierarchical model was called *presbyterian*. It prescribed that each local congregation be ruled by a council of elected elders, although in practice churches and their councils were often dominated by professional clergy.

Further, reformers believed that the Bible rather than the tradition or the sacraments of the church was the basis of the Christian faith. As a result, they encouraged the replacement of the Latin Bible with Bibles translated into the spoken language of the day so that it would be readily accessible to all believers who could read, not just to the privileged few, usually the educated priests. Also the preaching of the Word instead of the mass or eucharist was considered central to the worship service.

Reformers stressed that people could not earn their way into heaven by good works or financial contributions to the building of St. Peter's basilica in Rome, but that they could be saved only "by grace through faith," i.e. by believing and accepting God's free offer of salvation.

Praying to saints was considered useless and treating churchly things or actions (such as images, relics, holy water, pilgrimages and rituals) as holy was deemed foolish. The Reformation freed the believer from dependency on the church as *institution*. Being a member of a Protestant church meant full responsibility for one's own life and the life of his or her family, and full participation in the life of the church.

> ***"The believer stood in direct relationship to God...."***

How is Calvinism different?

How does Calvinism stand out from other Protestant faith expressions? Let me initially mention three points which make Calvinism somewhat unique. The section on stereotypes that follows this one will add to that.

1. In Calvinism there is a great emphasis on the fact that God is ruler and on the fact that God's sovereign rule can be seen in the way the universe was made, is upheld and is unfolding. A reverential awe for this rule of God must then find expression in the hearts and lives of believers in the form of an obedient life.

Some Calvinists limit this obedience to a right understanding of biblical teachings and a devout and pious life. Others, who believe that God has given a "cultural mandate" to people, want to expand this obedience to their participation in society and culture. They believe that one must serve God not just on Sunday but every day of the week in all endeavours. Hence, you will find that some Calvinists, particularly Dutch Calvinists, try to give expression to their Christian faith in such "mundane" things as schools, labour unions and political institutions.

2. Calvinism stresses more than most Protestant faith expressions the fact that all people are sinful and unable to keep God's commandments. Even though many people can be said to live decent lives and to get some pleasure out of helping others, the direction of a sinner's life ultimately is away from God and away from one's neighbour. But through faith and prayer the believer allows God to work good things in and through him or her.

3. Calvinists believe that God chooses certain people (the doctrine of election) to become his children of faith. A wrong understanding of this teaching has made some Reformed people feel rather helpless and has kept them from gaining full assurance of their own salvation or from spreading the Gospel to others. But most Calvinists have seen this teaching more as a comfort that salvation does not ultimately depend on them without denying the fact that every person is responsible for accepting or rejecting the Gospel. God's act of choosing is seen as the other (eternal) side of the coin of salvation, and is celebrated after the experience of redemption, while accepting salvation and working it out is our (time-bound) side.

> ***"....a person must be sinning if he or she is having fun."***

What about the stereotypes of Calvinism?

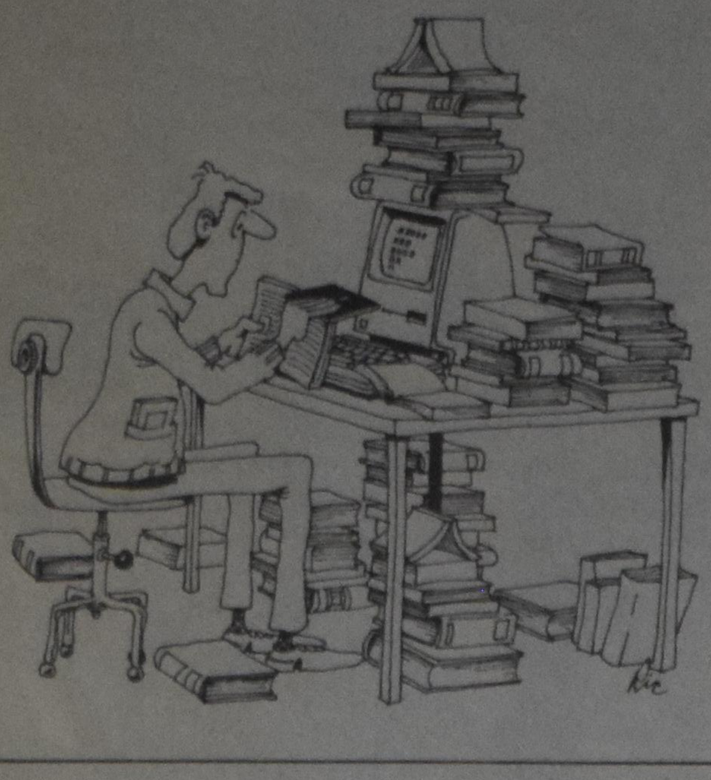
Calvinism has been caricatured in a number of ways, especially by people who have never experienced it intimately or by those who have been hurt by its colder and harsher side. It has been depicted, for example, as 1) a cold and analytical religion. Sometimes it is associated 2) with an enslaving work ethic or 3) with a kill-joy lifestyle. Then again, 4) it has been thought of as promoting a kind of separateness from others, or 5) it is seen as not having been kind to the arts, especially when it comes to liturgical art. 6) Calvinists have been described as repressive in their sexuality, as if sex is necessary but dirty.

Let's have a look at each of these stereotypes to see whether they have any basis in reality.

1. Is Calvinism a cold, analytical religion? Calvinism has had a proud tradition of clear and profound thinkers and scholars ever since John Calvin led the way with his masterpiece of Reformation literature know as the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. But sometimes this emphasis on thinking, especially theological thinking, has led to a denial of the importance of experiential and emotional faith. The emphasis on "truth" has at times led Calvinists into the schismatic habit of splitting churches as if they were hairs. Nevertheless, it would be off the mark to describe Calvinism as a cold religion. Calvinists relish strong family ties and have been on the forefront of relief work and refugee settlement.

Continued on p. 12....

Should you be afraid of Calvinists?



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2. Are Calvinists slaves of their own work ethic? Calvinists place a great emphasis on the importance of work as an act of service to God and their neighbour, and as a means of developing the great potential laid in creation. But sometimes they have elevated work to the level of religion or they have seen material gain as an automatic sign of God's blessing. It is to be expected of course, that those who live by the pleasure ethic will find fault with those who adhere to any kind of work ethic.

3. Do Calvinists promote a kill-joy lifestyle? Calvinists believe that pleasure and entertainment have their greatest value when they occur within the boundaries of God's will and the well-being of people. But at times they have acted as if a person must be sinning when he or she is having fun.

4. Do Calvinists promote separateness? Calvinists believe the words of Christ when he said that his followers are "in the world" but not "of the world." In other words, Christians must have a lifestyle that is distinct from lifestyles that destroy. And they must not bind themselves spiritually with unbelievers. But sometimes this call for distinctiveness has been translated into social separateness from others who have different beliefs or practices. At the political level that tendency degenerated into the tragic policy of *apartheid* in South Africa.

5. Are Calvinists enemies of the arts? Calvinists have done well in the arts as far as literature, music and painting is concerned, especially when these provided an opportunity to present a religious theme or to focus on a natural or domestic scene. They have generally shunned the more flamboyant art forms such as drama, film and ballet. Perhaps it is a fear of losing their soul in a role, or their suspicion of an esthetic or dramatic use of the body that has kept them from these art forms. Quite often a person's appreciation of the arts has to do with that person's level of education or degree of exposure to works of the imagination. Christians in general have rejected tendencies to place the demands of art above the demands of morality and faith (art for art's sake).

6. Do Calvinists repress sexuality? Calvinists believe that everything that God created is basically good but that sin can misdirect the use of things. They feel called to experience the joy of sexuality primarily within the bounds of marriage. Nevertheless, Calvinists have also been suspicious of sexuality and have sometimes restricted it to the need for propagation rather than widening it to include the enjoyment of passionate love.

As we have seen, some of the caricatures find their basis in a shadowy side of Calvinism. But in spite of all this, it must be said that the majority of Calvinists are fairly normal people and reject all "deformed" expressions of what it means to be "Reformed."

Conclusion

I hope this little catechism on Calvinism and the people who inhabit that particular house of faith has been helpful to you. If you meet a live Calvinist, why don't you engage him or her in a discussion about Calvinism. You might thaw your own feelings about this far-from-extinct species. And you'll never regret it! Once you have a Calvinist for a friend, you have a friend for life.

Of course, a Calvinist would be delighted if you joined him or her in adhering to John Calvin's favourite slogan: "I offer my heart to you, Lord, promptly and sincerely!" The highest good for a genuine Calvinist is not to promote a person called John Calvin or to focus unduly on the question of how he or she differs from other Christians, but to honour and promote the Lord of all Christianity — Jesus Christ, whose Kingdom is without end.

Thought of the week

"A Calvinist is not always right, but he is never wrong!"

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A trick poem from the past

About 10 years ago C.C. featured an article on a strange poem from the 16th century. The article was written in Dutch by the Rev. John VanHarmelen. We translate it here because it provides a peculiar and fascinating look at the time of the Reformers, a time very different from our own.

In the second volume of *Calvin's Principle for Singing in the Worship Service* by the Rev. H. Hasper, one can find a French poem and a Dutch translation of the same. An English translation might sound like this:

I renounce with heart and mind
both Luther and his kind.
I readily expel
What friends of Luther tell.
I fight with all my core
The heart of Luther's lore.
I always bring to nought
What ever Luther taught.
God throw in hell's hot flame
who carries Luther's name.

The pope and rule of Rome
I invite into my home.
All relics from of old
In high esteem I hold.
The account of purgatory
Is such a happy story.
The pope in all his ways
Deserves unstinted praise.
Each follower of Rome
Will enter heaven's home.

What does one do with such a strangely anti-Lutheran, pro-Catholic poem? Actually, it's a pro-Lutheran, anti-Catholic poem. There is a way of reading it that shows an opposite result.

This poem comes from France and was written at a time when Protestants were persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church. If a Protestant home was searched for reformational literature and authorities were to come upon this poem they might think that they were in a good Catholic home. The Roman Inquisition could not possibly object to the sentiments expressed in the poem.

But suppose one were to place the two stanzas right next to each other, and read the poem as it was intended to be read, then the following emerges:

I renounce with heart and mind the pope and rule of Rome,
both Luther and his kind I invite into my home.
I readily expel all relics from of old,
What friends of Luther tell in high esteem I hold.
I fight with all my core the account of purgatory,
The heart of Luther's lore is such a happy story.
I always bring to nought the pope in all his ways,
Whatever Luther taught deserves unstinted praise.
God throw in hell's hot flame each follower of Rome,
Who carries Luther's name will enter heaven's home.

The sentiment expressed by the poem is not one we would endorse today, but it fits the spirit of time when it was written. In the 16th century the Catholic Church in France persecuted Protestants for what they believed and the Protestants fought back with nastiness of their own. It's easy to see that the Protestants thought of all Catholics as being in league with Satan. We would say today that the pass word into heaven is neither Luther nor Rome but, "Do you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of your life and of the world?"

It is interesting to read how in these earlier days people tried to fool the Roman Inquisition. It was a difficult time during which one inquisitor is supposed to have said, "We don't mind burning a hundred persons in order to catch one heretic." I have forgotten the name of the inquisitor, but he has not been given a statue by the Catholic Church, nor has he been declared a saint.

Translated by B.W.

Issue

Last call to those thinking of leaving

Herman Praamsma

There is a sense in which this article comes too late. The news that some Christian Reformed congregations are actively busy separating themselves from the denomination maybe irreversible as well as bad news. I confess to a reluctance to write about this subject until this week, a reluctance that I may have to confess as a sin, since I too am personally involved in what is happening in my denomination. But I must write at this time.

There are four things (at least) that need to be talked about. One is the silliness that is rampant among members of the Christian Reformed Church. Another is the genuine concern that lives in the hearts of many. A third is a lack of perspective and leadership; and finally we need, perhaps more than anything else right now, to regain some historical balance.

Things that border on slander

First of all, lets get some unpleasantness on the table. Many people today have been infected with the bug of silliness, and as a result spread unworthy rumours which should have no place among us:

"There is a plan to make the CRC as liberal as possible so that the Board of Home Missions can realize its dream of gathering 400,000 by 2000! This explains the concerted effort to lead people away from the Word of God!"

"The changes in the new Psalter Hymnal *are there to promote women's liberation, to bring God down to our level, and are carefully calculated to loosen people up for liberal thinking."*

Many ministers don't really bring the Gospel anymore, I can list them for you!"

"Our denomination has opened the door wide for evolution, and people at Calvin College can teach whatever they like."

"God delights in separation...."

You will note that all these items have one thing in common: they are not questions and they are not concerns; they are declarative statements about people, about fellow Christians and their motivation.

Silly things! Things that border on slander; things that are evidence of gullibility and loose thinking as well as loose talking. Doubly silly, since the people who proclaim these pieces of wisdom are often quick to confess that they haven't read anything except the writings of those who agree with them and egg them on in their ignorance.

It is a great pity that these things obscure real concerns that legitimately live in people's hearts.

What are those concerns?

Concerns not exclusive to one 'side'

Quite simply stated, they are a concern that we continue to set our course in the light of God's Word and that we honour that Word in all that we say, write, do and think as a denomination. I warm up to that. It is my concern also and that of my colleagues in the Christian Reformed Church. If that were not the case, synod could dispense with study committees and simply (and pompously) pronounce on things. It is my contention that the concern for scriptural faithfulness is a common and shared concern in my denomination.

Does this mean then that we are always and everywhere agreed on what the Lord is saying to his people? Obviously not. Neither is that the point. Two people may reach different conclusions based on the same Scripture — witness our differences with our Baptist brothers and sisters in the matter of baptism; or with our dispensationalist friends when it comes to the millennium. Reformed folk haven't always agreed, either, when it came to such items as the length of creation days; the length of women's and men's hair; or our present disagreement concerning the ordination of women to all ecclesiastical offices.

Leaders can have vested interests

What *is* important is that we honour one another's motivation and remind each other of what binds us together, (which is immeasurably more than what divides us) and pursue our unity while respecting honest differences.

Is that too much to ask?

Is it really necessary that you *must* classify me as either a "liberal" or a "conservative"? Must our lust to be right colour everything we see, hear and do?

I remember vividly that back in the 1960s, when the "Dekker Controversy" was making headlines. The old *Torch and Trumpet*, the forerunner of *Outlook*, refused to publish an historical study written by my father, Louis Praamsma, (hardly a liberal!) because it clearly demonstrated that the great Synod of Dort tolerated a much greater divergence of views on the subject of the love of God than was commonly supposed. It did not fit the magazine's editorial point of view, and so my father was hurt (shocked is probably a better word) and the church was deprived of a valuable insight.

It is an illustration of the fact that "leaders" often have a vested interest in protecting their rightness, if not their righteousness.

And that brings me automatically to my third item.

No turning back

I think that "concerned" leaders have perhaps painted themselves into a corner over the years. They have told us so long and so loudly that things are going wrong that part of their own identity is at stake in being proven right.

We are all to blame a bit for that, I think. Maybe years ago we should have confronted these leaders with our love and reassurances. Maybe we should have told them, "There isn't a soul among us who isn't concerned about genuine scriptural obedience, and yes, belief in evolution as a theory of origins is incompatible, irreconcilable with being a Christian, and of course the confession is precious to us...," etc.

Is it really necessary that you must classify me as either a "liberal" or a "conservative"?

Maybe. But then again, something in me rebels against having to defend myself when no defence is needed, and in giving reassurances to people who are only interested in me as a name to be placed on a right list or wrong list. Part of me feels deeply offended and angered by "leaders" who feel free, apparently, to push me into a corner of distrust and suspicion unless I, too, denounce the same things they do; unless I take *The Banner* off my coffee table, withhold quotas and denounce non-sexist language as a ploy of the devil.

Sufficient reason to leave?

And the sad things is that those who would lead have very little sense of what it means to be *church*. For what is to be the upshot of this entire tragedy? Another church? A church which distinguishes itself by the fact that it allows no women in office (except, of course, as prophetesses, priestesses and queens)? Is *that* a reason for departing from a denomination?

Let's suppose for a moment, for the sake of an argument, that the Christian Reformed Church is totally mistaken on the issue of ordaining women. Is that by itself reason for breaking ties? Is it sufficient cause?

The other day I ran across a yellow press clipping from a 1952 issue of *De Groninger Kerkbode*. The article, written by my father, sought to show what the Secessionists of 1834 considered sufficient reason for breaking fellowship with a church.

My father quoted from an 1837 issue of the Dutch magazine called *De Reformatie*. The 1837 article made clear, my father wrote, that the right to secede could not be based on secondary issues, even very important secondary issues, but only on the main issue to which the author returns with emphasis: "Once again we repeat it: the denial of Christ in word and deed, through the putting aside of existing confessions, and the refusal to accept public confession, is proof that the Almighty removed the candlestick."

My father further wrote: "The Secession (of 1834) did not justify itself because it could point to certain errors in the Reformed Church; or because it considered the synodical organization unbearable; or because of the hymnbook; but exclusively because the entire confession was let go of. Had that not been its conviction, then according to its own testimony, it would have foundered on the sands of separatism."

Evidence points the other way

I ask my brothers and sisters in all seriousness: has the Christian Reformed Church become corrupt in its very root and branches? Is Christ denied in words and deed? Are all confessions pushed aside and denied? Really?

I see plentiful and constant evidences to the contrary. There is the desire to love and serve the Lord on the part of church members, on the part of councils and classes and synods. Do we always succeed? Do we never disagree?

Those are rhetorical questions of course, ones to which we already know the answer. But to promote honest disagreement to charges that others are basically denying Christ and playing fast and loose with Scripture and our confessions is both irresponsible and misleading.

We have to get away from silliness, learn to share our genuine love and concern for our Lord and a vibrant Reformed faith, and regain mutual respect as we pray together for the light of the Spirit.

Last call?

Herman Praamsma is co-pastor of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Brampton, Ont.

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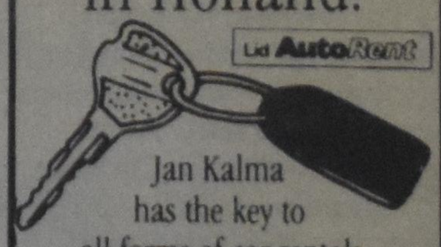

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Evangelical churches in Israel face continued persecution

Ruth Trippy

As a key player in negotiations for the release of hostages, Israel is again front page news. This, along with waves of immigration and repeated wars, provokes the question: where is the evangelical church in Israel today? What is it like? What are its numbers and how effective is it?

Reports on the work of the church have been "clouded by incautious reporting, a meagre and superficial knowledge of the situation," writes Baruch Maoz, co-founder of MISHKAN, an international theological forum on Jewish evangelism. He states that out of a population of over four million, 80,000 are Christian — of every conceivable stripe. Protestants number only 4,500.

This small number of Protestants is divided into two groups: expatriate churches and indigenous.

Though some 20 expatriate churches exist, they have little influence with Israelis because their language and culture reflects that of their native countries.

The real hope for Israel is with the indigenous churches, the majority of whose members are Messianic Jews. Yet at present these Jewish Christian congregations number only 30, with more than half of that number established in the last decade. Consequently, they suffer many of the problems of immature believers.

How did the Jewish Christian church become so impoverished, numerically and spiritually?

Christianity an 'aberration' to Jews

Much of the answer is found in the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Because of real or perceived threats many Jewish Christians left the country at that time, fearing they would no longer be protected when British soldiers departed. Consequently, the Jewish Christian population was depleted.

Among other factors, Orthodox Jewry took an increasingly radical stance towards politically asserting control over Jewish identity and Israeli civil privileges. Jewish Christians were relegated to the fringe of society. Some forsook evangelism and all were encouraged to maintain a low profile.

Maoz, a pastor himself, relates that even today the Gospel as such is not known in Israel. "Most Jewish Israelis consider it to be a Hellenized aberration which broke off from Judaism and then removed itself yet further from its origin by deifying a human so as to make him equal with God. To embrace such a faith, especially in light of 2,000 years of persecution, is tantamount to national treason."

Opposition to the Gospel is both active and passive.

Israel accords freedom for all "recognized" religions. However, Jewish Christianity is not a recognized religion because Jews are not supposed to believe in Jesus. Therefore Israel feels no obligation to preserve religious liberties for what to them is a "non-existent" community.

For example, continual efforts are made to pass legislation either forbidding or restricting evangelism. Some local municipalities forbid use of buildings for congregational activity by selective application of zoning restrictions. The more prominent Jewish Christians will sometimes have their mail tampered with, their telephones tapped or their names defamed in public.

One instance of persecution took place with the Beit Asaph congregation in Netanya, just north of Tel Aviv. The congregation has a ministry to the handicapped. Yad-Le Achim (an organization that enjoys substantial financial support from the government) spear-headed an effort to blacken the church's reputation by accusing its two elders of preying on the weak and innocent and wanted to connect the church with an unresolved murder of a reporter investigating the church's activities.

Christians abroad sometimes compound problem

Christians from other countries can also add to the Jewish Christian's burden. Some make the mistake of giving the Israeli government unconditional political support without clarifying their desire that Jewish Christians have the same religious freedoms as other groups in the country.

Despite opposition to the Gospel, the church is starting to participate in public marches, tract distribution, door-to-door work, home Bible studies, public lectures and bookselling.

In addition, the massive wave of immigration from Russia has opened another door of ministry. One example is the work of the Grace and Truth Christian Assembly in Rishon LeTsion, southeast of Tel Aviv. It called one of its members, a recent immigrant from Russia, to work as an evangelist among other immigrants.

An overriding concern of Maoz, who was a spokesperson at Lausanne II in Manila, is that many Christians both in Israel and abroad are under the misconception that Jews don't need to be evangelized, that Jews have a special place in God's plan of salvation so that God himself will take care of them.

The evangelical church has much to contend with in Israel, but Maoz sees encouraging signs of growth and maturity in starting to deal with these challenges. Yet he also urges the Christian church worldwide to offer its prayers and support in order to help procure Israel's salvation.

Ruth Trippy lives in Asheville, N.C. After first writing this article for World *magazine, she amended and updated it for* Calvinist Contact.

small talk

Alice Los

Reconnecting with the past

We've had first-time visitors from Holland at our house. It proved to be a satisfying experience. It was good to become re-acquainted with relatives whom we did not know all that well anymore. After all, for some 30-odd years we had not visited for more than a few hours at a time on our own infrequent trips home.

And so it was a joy to hear a sister and her brother reminisce at leisure about their childhood which had been such a rich source of love and laughter for both. It was fun to remember my own school days with a brother-in-law who had been my classmate from Grade 5 through high school, although it was sobering to find that a good number of our fellow students did not walk this earth anymore.

Showing off

Naturally, we wanted to take our guests out for some sightseeing. Niagara Falls rated high on our mutual list of tourist attractions. This was easy enough to arrange. The fall colours ran a close second or higher (in my book) but they could not be ordered by mere people to appear on time. But they did, and my heart sang as we drove the highways and byways together, overwhelmed by so much splendour lavishly tossed about on hills and in valleys by the Maker of trees and colours.

Inevitably, a cavernous shopping mall or two were included in the itinerary. Our visitors were quite impressed by it all and generous in their appreciation of the country which we call home.

We also took them to see our children. It's what all parents like to do, to show off their offspring. It's also what they love to talk about. And so we, in turn, looked at pictures and listened to tales about the young men and women who are our nephews and nieces but whom we remember best as the little tykes we left behind, with their parents. They are all part of the heritage from which we removed ourselves when we uprooted our own family to be transplanted into foreign soil.

A treasured foundation

In the long years since that soil allowed us to take root we've come to cherish its components of space and freedom, of culture and friendship, of beauty and new challenges. It's where we have been privileged to continue as members of the family of God. It's what we now know best.

And so when part of our past enters our home and consciousness again, it takes some effort to find common ground. It was good to discover it. While we talked and talked some more, the town of our youth came alive again in our mind's eye. We remembered the people, the streets, the customs — all the peculiar things which had filled our formative years. I was glad to realize it was a treasured foundation for life in a different but now familiar culture, *not* something lost to be mourned forever.

Meanwhile we have taken our visitors to the airport again and on the way back we had to cope with an empty feeling. But there's work to be done! While here, our guests insisted on doing the dishes, three times a day. A very helpful gesture indeed! Still, it will take some doing for me to get every last fork and spoon in its proper place. Did anyone see where they left the cutting board?!

Alice Los lives in Inkerman, Ont.

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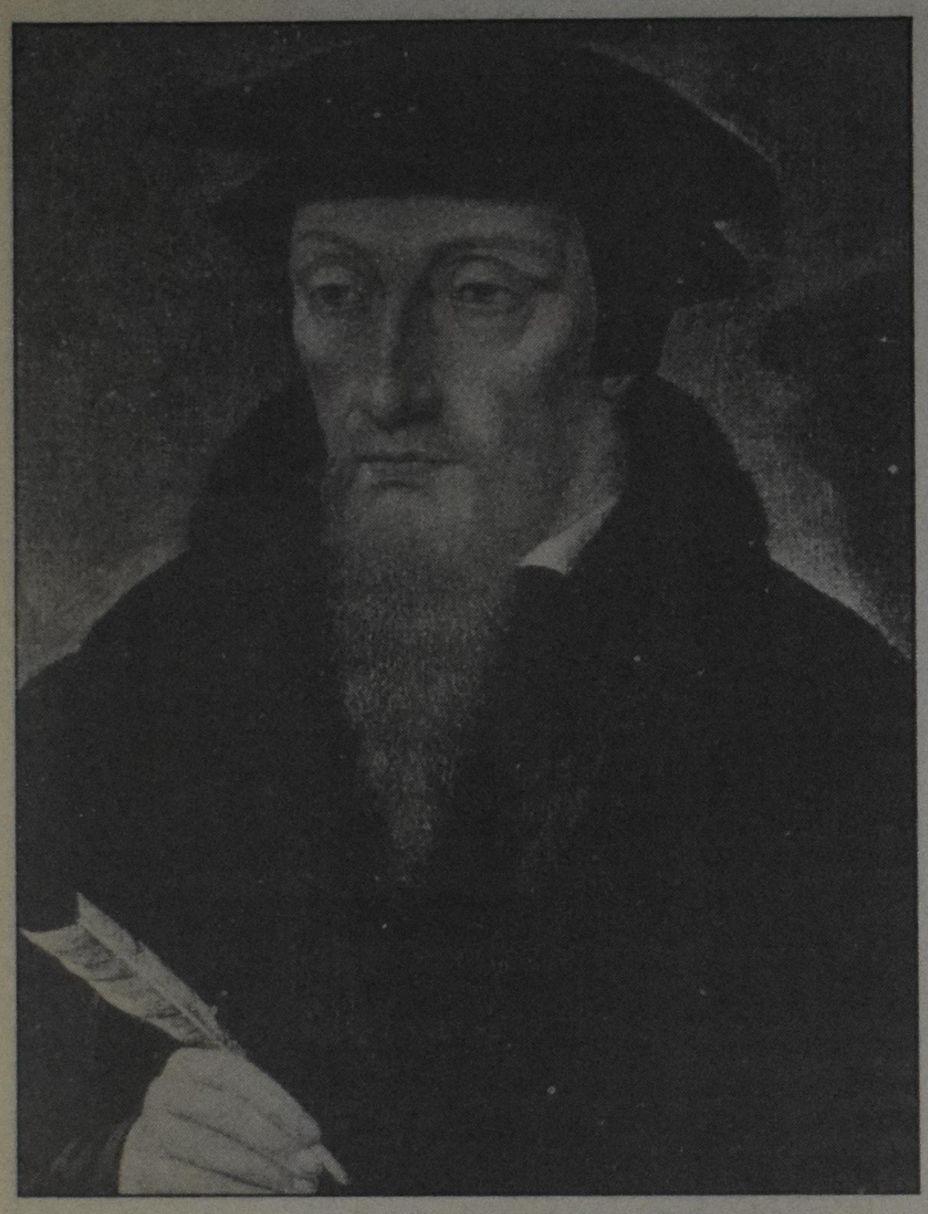
Reformation Day

John Calvin: 'Prince' or tyrant?



Calvin in a portrait found in England as painted by a contemporary.

....continued from p. 10

even the slightest hindrance. During the whole course of her illness she was more anxious about her children than about herself. Since I was afraid that she might torment herself needlessly by repressing her worry, three days before her death I took occasion to mention that I would not neglect my duties [to the children from her previous marriage]. She spoke up at once: "I have already committed them to God."

Calvin the killjoy?

There was another side to Calvin's personality, the side revealing the argumentative, authoritarian scholar and theologian. And that picture of Calvin is not entirely false. His life as a theologian, preacher and Reformer was punctuated with doctrinal disputes with, for example, the city council of Geneva. The city council and the church council consisted of essentially the same men, church/state relations being still intermingled as they had been for many years when there was only one church, the Catholic Church. The churches which had broken with Rome were still routinely subordinate to the civil authorities, even in appointing clergy and deciding who could take communion.

One of the most intense and heated debates centred around the Geneva city council's relinquishing of its right to excommunicate (Reformed) church members. That right belonged to the church council, Calvin insisted. The debate raged for years. At the end of the first "round" (1538) Calvin and Farel were expelled from Geneva by the city fathers.

When one reads the verbal exchanges which took place in the height of such controversies, they seem venomous, mean-spirited and downright un-Christian to most modern Calvinists.

At that point, Calvin was still at a stage, his letters indicate, at which he was rather ambivalent about his calling. The conflict in Geneva obviously affected him deeply, though he was not entirely blameless in the matter. He had the sensitivity to see it as his own failure. It was at this point that Bucer came into his life and provided the fatherly guidance that he needed. Bucer invited Calvin to Strasbourg to minister to fellow French refugees there.

Calvin went; and despite his sense of exile there among the many Anabaptist German-speakers (a foreign tongue to him), he was happier than in Geneva, and perhaps happier than at any time in his life. It is probably not coincidental, then, that Calvin accomplished a great deal in Strasbourg. He finished the second, considerably expanded edition of his *Instituti Christianae Religionis* (Institutes of the Christian Religion), preached and lectured much, drew up the now well-known Strasbourg liturgy, and was married.

It was at Bucer's insistence that Calvin finally returned to Geneva, a move he resisted and dreaded. But again, this time also at the invitation of the city council, he went. And in light of the ordeal that followed, his dread was justified, Bouwsma notes.

Stern policies

Calvin was more mature now but was nevertheless immovable in his desire to impose order on Geneva. Calvin drew up his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances,* regulations which spelled out what he believed necessary for a well-ordered church. He was behind the dusting off of some old, ignored civil laws regarding conduct, including such things as the refraining from dancing — the ignoring of which could get you a jail sentence. (Reformed scholar and C.C. columnist Al Wolters says that Calvin's prohibitions against dancing — and against images in the church, for example — were not issued because he disapproved of dancing or art, *per se*, but because the misuse of those things had been leading people to sexual immorality and to idolatry).

Calvin's policies were constantly resisted, however, which, in turn, proved to be a constant frustration to him. All these controversies cannot merely be seen as the product of a pig-headed authoritarian. That would be simplistic — and untrue. They cannot be understood apart from how society at that time operated and from Calvin's totally sincere and deep-seated desire that in all things, he and his flock submit to the rule of Christ.

That being said, there was an incident (alluded to earlier) that most people would agree was "a black spot indeed not only on Calvin and his regime, but on his time," in Louis Praamsma's words (*Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 1968). That event was the burning of Servetus as a heretic, a death in which Calvin concurred.

How could such a man of faith and biblical insight not only agree to, but urge and be co-responsible for, the tortured death of another person for *doctrinal* errors, fundamental though they might have been?

The repugnance of the deed stands, yet its historical context must be understood, Servetus' disputes with Calvin were not on "non-essentials." as Calvin himself called all those matters that do not affect our salvation. Rather, as an anti-trinitarian he was guilty of blasphemy; he denied the very nature of God. For his part, Sevetus believed Calvin to be the heretic, and when brought to trial fully believed he would win and live to see Calvin burn (literally). Instead, that fate was meted out to him, though Calvin himself had argued for a slightly more humane means of death — hanging.

As hard as it is for 20th-century people to comprehend, blasphemy against the holy Trinity was not left to God to avenge but would have been punishable by death anywhere in the Carolingian empire.

It is a tribute to the Genevan Calvinists of the early 20th century that in 1903 they erected a monument calling attention to Servetus' execution and charging Calvin with "an error which was that of his century."

Under stress

Bouwsma argues persuasively and not unsympathetically that John Calvin was a man "driven by external demands but above all by powerful impulses within himself." We might now call him an over-achiever. "He was never satisfied with his own performance, always contrasting the petty done with the vast undone," notes Bouwsma. As a young man he was already lamenting his "habitual sloth."

Even in his last will and testament he accuses himself of deficiencies in energy and achievement. He had a host of physical ailments, including severe and frequent headaches, and bleeding from the stomach (ulcers or perhaps Crohn's disease). Such stress-related problems fit with such a personality and betray the tension under which Calvin lived.

Yet, in reading his letters and even excerpts from his *Institutes* and commentaries, one cannot help but be empathetic. Here was great man of God, blessed with astute insight, a keen intellect, as well as an innate sensitivity and compassion. Perhaps he suffered from a malady that still seems to afflict many of his followers 400 years later: not quite understanding how to integrate that God-given, formidable intellect with his equally God-given emotions.

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Advice

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Dear P & M:

My older brother bugs me. He's always right, according to my dad. He's good in school, good with the girls and a good athlete. I'm always in trouble with the principal, I don't like girls and my dad, well, that's another story. My mom understands. She says we just have different genes and it's OK. But why did God have to create us so differently?

Dear Different Genes:

For starters, we'd like to encourage you to accept yourself as the unique person that you are. Your brother has certain strengths; so do you. Our guess is that those strengths lie in different areas that are not being affirmed by your dad.

In a subtle way you are the victim of favouritism. Somehow the message is coming through to you that it's better to be like your brother than to be yourself. Your mom has taken a healthy approach but your dad needs to make some significant changes in his parenting.

His lack of understanding and acceptance fills you with frustration and resentment. Your acting out and getting into trouble accomplishes two things. It expresses your anger and it gets you the attention you want from your father. Unfortunately this puts you on a self-destructive road because your own talents won't be developed and your relationship with your dad will deteriorate. This downward spiral has to be stopped.

Please share your feelings with a teacher or guidance counsellor at school. You need a male role-model in your life who will encourage your unique talents. It would be especially helpful if someone could open your dad's eyes on your behalf. Your mom is a key person who seems to understand you and may be able to confront your dad about his favouritism.

Parents can learn a lot from the stories of Jacob and Esau, and Jacob and Joseph. First as a son, then as a father, Jacob received and extended favouritism. Think of all the sibling rivalry that resulted! Consider the jealousy, trouble and hatred among those two generations of brothers! By his grace, God was able to use these family problems in a way that brought blessing and advanced his redemption. But every mother and father can benefit from re-reading these biblical events as a warning against unfavourably comparing one child with another. There is no surer way to "exasperate your children" or "provoke them to anger" (Eph. 6:4, NIV and RSV).

As a son you want your dad's approval more than your mom's. We hope you will get it sooner or later. In the meantime, thank God for a mother who understands. Look for positive ways to let your "different genes" mature and come to expression. Start by accepting yourself as God has made you. As your self-respect and self-confidence grow, others will learn to appreciate you, too. We're sure that will eventually include the principal, and especially your dad.

Dear Readers:

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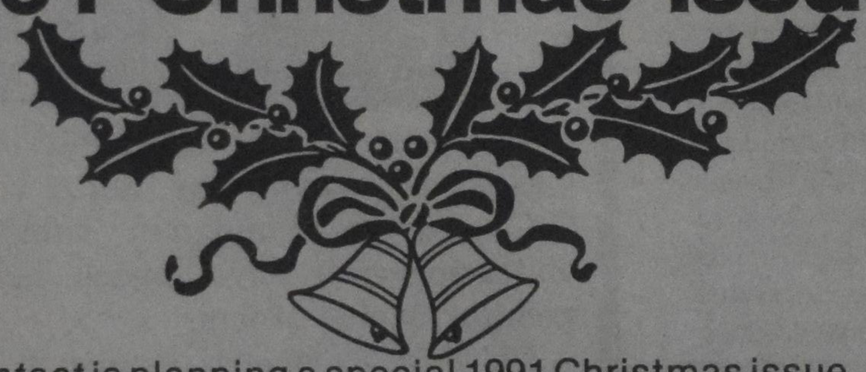

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In addition, we plan to distribute 16,000 copies of the Christmas issue to Reformed Christians across the continent free of charge.

To print so many extra copies costs money. We are appealing to the business community, among others, to help us out.

Please do not wait. Take a moment to complete and return the attached coupon.

Your continued support will be greatly appreciated.

Deadline for advertisements in the Christmas issue is November 22!!!

COUPON **Check one**

1) Business Card — Size about 3" x 1¾"
Cost: $125 + GST = $133.75 ☐

2) 1/8 page — Size 5" x 3½"
Cost: $225 + GST = $240.75 ☐

3) 1/4 page — Size 5" x 7½"
Cost: $400 + GST = $428.00 ☐

4) Half Page — Size 10" x 7½"
Cost: $700 + GST = $749.00 ☐

5) Full Page — Size 10" x 15"
Cost: $1200 + GST = $1284.00 ☐

6) Sponsorship Advertising ☐

I do not wish to place my own ad, but will gladly sponsor a Christian organization advertisement. I understand *Calvinist Contact* will obtain copy from the organization indicated.

I wish to sponsor an ad for _____

_____

This ad should be of the size
___ full-page
___ half-page
___ 1/4-page
___ 1/8-page
___ card

Please enclose your ad copy with this coupon.

___I enclose payment _____Please bill me

Sender: (*Please print*)

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Code_____

Return by November 22 to: Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
(Fax: 416-682-8313)

Classified

Classified rates

GST Inclusive

Births	$35.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$35.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $13.50 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $25.00. Letter under file number, $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge. (Free when published with anniversary announcement celebrating 50 years or more).

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive.

ATTENTION!

a) *Calvinist Contact* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format, *unless you instruct us otherwise.*

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax are *not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Calvinist Contact* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to six column inches. *Calvinist Contact* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $13.50 per column inch (GST inclusive).

NEWLYWEDS

Non-subscribing newlyweds whose wedding announcement with their future address appears in *Calvinist Contact* will receive a letter offering a first-year subscription for only $20.00 (GST inclusive)! To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request and pay for the wedding announcement to enclose $20.00 and the couple's future address.

Calvinist Contact Publishing Ltd.
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (416) 682-8311
Fax: (416) 682-8313

Births

LOOY:

"You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139: 13b-14).

We, Heather and Anthony, joyfully announce the birth of our first child,

TERESA JANELLE

at home on Sept. 23, 1991. Teresa is the first grandchild for Elske Stadt and John & Donna Stadt, all of Victoria, B.C., and the eighth grandchild for Janny and Tony Looy of Kingston, Ont.

Home address: 10418-144th St., Edmonton, AB T5N 2V4

VAN DOMMELEN:

OH BROTHERS IT IS A GIRL!

Bill and Barb are thankful to God, who made everything well for the safe arrival of a healthy girl. We named her

LISA KAYLIN

born Oct. 16, 1991.

A sister for Billy Joe, Scotty, and Mark.

A granddaughter for Bill and Joanne Van Dommelen of Brampton and Grace Engelsman of Stouffville.

Home address: 82 Sandmere Ave., Brampton, ON L6Z 3Z9

Birthday

DE VRIES (nee Kerkstra):

We, the children of

MRS. EVERDINA DE VRIES
(nee Kerkstra)

are pleased to announce that our mother will celebrate her 90th birthday, the Lord willing, on Nov. 5, 1991.

We wish you God's blessing, mom!

From:
Wally & Bertha De Vries
Piet & Jenny Vermeulen
Bill & Dinie De Vries
Jake & Vera De Vries
Klaas & Pat Smit
Bob & Betty Vander Stelt
and from the 29 grandchildren, and 38 great-grandchildren.

Home address: Holland Chr. Homes, Covenant Towers, Apt. #410, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S, Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

DYKXHOORN:

Happy 80th Birthday!
November 3, 1991

MRS. CATHERINA (KAREN) DYKXHOORN

May the Lord be with you and sustain you one day at a time.

Your loving family.

Mom and Oma's address:
157 Raylawn Cres., Georgetown, ON L7G 4M6

Anniversaries

Bowmanville Bowmanville
1956 November 10 1991

On their 35th wedding anniversary, we joyfully praise the Lord. We thank him that he has richly blessed the love and commitment to each other, of our parents,

BILL and TONI BUMA

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them and keep them in his loving care, together, for many more years. We thank you Dad and Mom [Pake and Beppe] for all the Christian love, support and guidance you have given us.

Best wishes from your children and grandchildren:
Ann & Brian Dykstra, Dunsford, Ont.
Trevor, Sheryl, Larissa, Sheenah
Simon & Tammy Morrison [girlfriend] — Bowmanville, Ont.
Lisa & Dave Doorenspleet [boyfriend] — at home
John — Bowmanville, Ont.

Home address: Rg. Rd. 57, R.R. #1, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2

Owen Sound Beamsville
1956 November 10 1991

Wedding text: Eccles. 4: 9-12.

Thanks be to God who has blessed our parents,

BILL and MARGARET BUYS
(nee Hogendoorn)

with 35 years of marriage.

We hope and pray that the Lord will continue to bless you and give you many more years together. May he also continue to be your source of strength.

With love:
Margo & Tim Janssens — Thunder Bay
Bill & Joany Buys — Hamilton
Kathy & Peter Kralt — Grimsby
Brian Buys — Ottawa
Carl & Anne Buys — Beamsville
David & Linda Buys — St. Catharines
Mark & Sandra Buys — Grimsby
John Buys — at home
Darrel Buys — at home
Trevor Buys — at home
and your 14 grandchildren.

To celebrate this occasion an open house will be held at their home on Saturday, Nov. 9, 1991, from 2-5 p.m.

Best wishes only please!

Home address: 4271 Village Park Dr., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B8

Anniversaries

Grimsby Hamilton
1966 November 4 1991

"And Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding" (John 2:2).

We thank our faithful heavenly Father that we may celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary with our children, family and friends.

CASEY and MARYKE FLOKSTRA
(nee Termorshuizen)

Rick & Melinda — Hamilton, Ont.
Steven & Melanie — Hamilton, Ont.
Michael — at home
Michelle — at home

Home address: 567 West 5th St., Hamilton, ON L9C 3P7

1931 November 11 1991

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Ps. 32:8).

With joy and thankfulness to our Lord, we look forward to celebrating the 60th wedding anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

ADRIAN and JANNA KAMERMAN
(nee Pols)

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to surround them with his love and bless them in the years to come.

With love and congratulations from your children:
John & Bette
Cor & Agnes
Abe & Ann
Adrian & Nellie
Femmie & John
Simon & Margaret
and from your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Open house will be held on Nov. 16, 1991, from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, Ont.

Best wishes only!

Home address: Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Apt. 609, Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

1931 1991
Oldenzaal Grimsby

We wait in hope for the Lord. He is our help and our shield" (Ps. 33:20).

With great joy and gratitude to God we hope to celebrate the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

HENDRIKUS and JANTINA BERENDINA LIP
(nee Van der Berg)

on Nov. 7, 1991.

Congratulations Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma.

Hank & Evelyn Lip
John & Henny Rensen
seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Home address: c/o Shalom Manor, 112 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5

Essex Georgetown
1966 1991

November 5, 1991, will mark our 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank God for his continuing grace in our lives and in the lives of our children whom he has entrusted to our care.

Please come and celebrate with us at our open house Friday evening, Nov. 8, 1991.

GERRY and CHRISTINE NUMAN

Kim and Steve
Janice
Lisa
David

"If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:19).

Home address: 67 Main St. North, Georgetown, ON L7G 3H5

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Henry and Riek Vanderlaan (nee Doorn) on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary!

't Zandt, Gr. Guelph, Ont.
1936 November 12 1991

With praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, we announce the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

HENRY and RIEK VANDERLAAN
(nee Doorn)

We thank you for the love and care you have given all of us and pray that God will continue to bless you richly.

Happy anniversary from your children:
Don
Andrew
Abe
Margaret Geerts
Ida Sloot
Peter
and their spouses, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Father and Mother both celebrated their 75th birthdays this year.

Home address: 70 Woodlawn Rd. E., Apt. 216, Guelph, ON N1H 7W7

1946 November 7 1991

With thankfulness and praise to God, we announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

REINDER and NETTIE VANDERBOOR
(nee Hellinga)

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you with many more healthy happy years together and with us.

With love from your family:
Tina & John Berkhuizen — Willowdale, Ont.
Ian, Jennifer
Roely & Melanie Vanderboor — London, Ont.
Vincent, Neville
Bill & Greta Vanderboor — Richmond Hill, Ont.
Mark, Andrea, Alan, Steven, Heather, Leanne
Rommie & Sonja Vanderboor — Richmond Hill, Ont.
Michael, Andrew, Kevin, Christopher
Marsha & Bob France — Markham, Ont.
Matthew, Jason
Netty & Don Ryan — Richmond Hill, Ont.
Diana, Paul, Donna

Open house will be held at the Community Chr. Ref. Church, 45 Crosby Ave., Richmond Hill, Ont., on Saturday, Nov. 9, 1991, from 2-4 p.m.

Home address: 240 Horsham Ave., Willowdale, ON M2N 2A6

1956 October 16 1991

With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord, we celebrate the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

JOHN and GERRY VAN ZEUMEREN
(nee Veenhuis)

May God bless you richly in the coming years as you continue to be a blessing to each of us.

With our love and congratulations:
Wilfred & Vicky VanZeumeren
Jessica, Emily, Miranda
Randy & Jessica VanZeumeren
Brenda & Allen Bron
Eric, Jeffrey, Kyle, Alaina
Mark & Cathy VanZeumeren
Inger & Charlie Poirier
Christopher
Rayna VanZeumeren

Home address: P.O. Box 981, Truro, N.S. B2N 5G7

Personal

Widow, 58 years old, Reformed, living in the Toronto area, would like to meet an honest, sincere, non-smoking gentleman between 58 and 62 years old. I love animals, reading and a warm home life. Please respond with picture to File # 2574, c/o Calvinist Contact, 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Single woman, age 31, wishes to meet Christian gentleman, age 26-40. Reply to Box # 1313, Thunder Bay South, ON P7C 5W2.

Gentleman in mid-twenties, living in Ontario (farmer), would like to correspond and meet a Christian young lady. Reply under File #2575, c/o Calvinist Contact, 261, Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Christian Reformed lady, would like to meet a Christian gentleman with happy personality. Mid 60s. Please reply to File #2576, c/o Calvinist Contact, 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Don't rob yourself of more business — advertise in our classified pages!

Classified

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Jacobus and Catharina Wever (nee Schurer) on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary!

1931 November 12 1991

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

With joy and thankfulness, we are happy to announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

JACOBUS and CATHARINA WEVER
(nee Schurer)

It is our prayer that God will keep you both in his care, and continue to bless you in the future.

Congratulations and much love from your growing family:

Freda & Wietse v.d. Bergs — Donkerbroek, the Neth.
Tony & Jean Wever — Belleville, Ont.
Nick & Minety Wever — Monarch, Alta.
Ann & John Kempenaar — Demorestville, Ont.
John & Willy Wever — Belleville, Ont.
Mike Wever (deceased)
Susan & Keith Ippel — St. Catharines, Ont.
Dirk & Anna-Marie Wever — Taber, Alta.
Mary & Sam Rekker — Mississauga, Ont.
Rennie & Ken Keuning — Belleville, Ont.
Bert & Wilma Wever — Linwood, Ont.
Roeli & Carl Brink — Newcastle, Ont.

39 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

There will be a family reunion on Nov. 9, 1991, at the Kinsmen Centre, Belleville, Ont., and an open house on Nov. 16, 1991, from 2-5 p.m. at the Chr. Ref. Church in Belleville, 72 Orchard Dr.

Home address: R.R. #6 Belleville, ON K8N 4Z6

For Rent

For rent in Spring Hill, Florida, two-bedroom mobile home; ten min. from beach. $500 U.S. a month. Call (416) 387-1160 after 4:00 p.m.

Affordable Florida vacation

Live in a completely furnished trailer in a cozy park, near attractions in central Florida. Available for two weeks or longer. Just bring your personal items. Starting at $150 per week.

Sunshine RV Rentals, 922 N. Grove St., Eustis, FL 32726, USA.
Phone: 1 (904) 589-1323.

Obituaries

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

On Tuesday, Oct. 8, 1991, the Lord took to himself our dear son, brother, uncle, and boyfriend

ANDREW BOOGAARD

after a valiant struggle with cancer at the young age of 21.

Lovingly remembered and sadly missed by:

Parents, Peter & Nela Boogaard — Rexdale, Ont.
Brother of:
Len & Joanne Boogaard — Herbert, Sask.
William & Annette Boogaard, Holland Landing, Ont.
Walter & Lori Boogaard — Clearbrook, B.C.
Girlfriend:
Claudine Holmes — Rexdale, Ont.
Nieces and nephews.

The funeral service was held Friday, Oct. 11, 1991, at The Second Chr. Ref. Church, Weston, Ont., Rev. Gerard Ringnalda, Rev. Sidney Couperus, and Rev. Gregg Martin officiating.

Correspondence address: 19 Bemberg Court, Rexdale, ON M9W 3V6

Brampton Ottawa
June 1, 1959 Oct. 13, 1991

On Oct. 13, the Lord called to his eternal home our loving son, brother and uncle,

LEONARD BYDEVAATE

in his 33rd year.

Lovingly remembered by his mother, Rita Bydevaate.

Brother and uncle of:
Audrey Jean & Glen Lee
Christopher, James, Kevin
Jeff & Sue Bydevaate

Predeceased by his father, Chris Bydevaate on Feb. 12, 1990.

Funeral services were held at the Chr. Ref. Church, Georgetown, Ont., on Oct. 21, 1991.

Leonard's life was an example of Matt. 6: 25-34.

Correspondence address: 61 Pr. Charles Dr., Georgetown, ON L7G 3V2

Obituaries

"Saved by Grace"

Westerbork Red Deer
May 21, 1929 Oct. 2, 1991

On Oct. 2, 1991, the Lord took home his child

HENRY BRONNO "HANK" MEYER

at the age of 67 years.

He will always be remembered by his loving family: his wife, Pearl Meyer (Kits).

Hank's children:
Gary & Myna Meyer — Lacombe, Alta.
Margret & John Bos — Revelstoke, B.C.
Ben & Joyce Meyer — Red Deer, Alta.
Tony & Agnes Meyer — Lacombe, Alta.
Marian & Doug Huisken — Minneapolis, Min.
Bev & John terSteege — Red Deer, Alta.
Brenda Meyer — Stony Plain, Alta.
and 14 grandchildren.

Pearl's children:
Linda & Ralph Boschman — Red Deer, Alta.
Geri & John Rypstra — Red Deer, Alta.
Ardy & Theresa de Jonge — Penhold, Alta.
Stan & Louise de Jonge — Red Deer, Alta.
Quinten de Jonge — Red Deer, Alta.
and five grandchildren.

He is also survived by one sister in Ontario, one brother in Nova Scotia, four brothers and two sisters in Holland.

Predeceased by his first wife Sophie in 1987, a grandson, one brother and three sisters.

Correspondence address: #70-2816 Botterill Cres., Red Deer, AB T4R 2H7

Aalden, Dr. Ottawa, Ont.

"Just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven" (I Cor. 15:49).

Trusting in that assurance, our dear mother and grandmother

RUTH (ROELOFJE) NEUTEL

ended her earthly pilgrimage of 84 years on Oct. 17, 1991.

We grieve our loss and rejoice in her victory.

Harry & Deet Neutel — Centreton, Ont.
Jackie & Stuart, Bert & Brenda, Bonnie & Michael, Angelique & Erwin, Susan & Paul, Yvonne & Edwin, Eugene.
Albert & Jane Neutel — Lawrence, Kansas
Albert, Carol & Andy, Ed & Karen, Ingrid & Phil
Gladys & Joe Baart — Dunrobin, Ont.
Jace & Wendy, Ralph, Joanna
Helen & Bram Boertjes — Collingwood, Ont.
William, Brian, Leona
Denise, Julie, Ryan & Amy Neutel
Walter & Ineke Neutel — Ottawa
Winston, Dan, Rebecca
Alice & Bob Proper — Russell, Ont.
John, Christina, Justin, Phillip, Tommy
Margaret & Nick Van Dyk — Russell, Ont.
Aidan, Evan, Colin

and 24 great-grandchildren.

Correspondence address: 829 Walkley Rd., Ottawa, ON K1V 6R6

For Sale

The Bible and Islam
by Rev. Bassam Madany
$4.95 Canada / $3.95 U.S.
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind.
Write: The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

For Sale

HAMMOND RT3 Concert Model Organ
with American Guild of Organist. 32 key Pedal Board. Complete with Leslie Speaker and Hammond Tone Cabinet. $3,000 or best offer. Bethel Chr. Ref. Church, Waterdown, Ont.
Contact: Bill Vander Kruk (416) 689-6984 or Hans Vander Stoep (416) 522-8602.

Teachers

DRAYTON, Ont.: Calvin Chr. School needs a teacher for **Grade 1**, due to a maternity leave. This position will be available from December 1, 1991, until the end of the school year in June 1992. The ability to teach French is an asset. Please forward all inquiries and resumes to: Mr. A.J. Vanderstoel, Principal, Calvin Chr. School, Box 141, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0. Telephone: (519) 638-2935.

Teachers

LONDON, Ont.: London District Christian Secondary School requires a **French language teacher** (part- or full-time), to fill a six-month maternity leave, beginning Jan. 6, 1992. Please send letter of application and resume, by Nov. 15, to Mr. H. Kooy, Principal. c/o LDCSS 24 Braeside Ave., London, ON N5W 1V3. Phone: (519) 455-4360.

OSHAWA, Ont.: Immanuel Chr. School, is accepting applications for the position of **teaching principal**, to commence with the 1992/93 school year. Please direct all inquiries and resumes to: Ann Mars, c/o Immanuel Chr. School, 849 Rossland Rd., West, Oshawa, ON L1H 7K4.

Teachers

Teachers

EDMONTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Employment Opportunity

The **Edmonton Christian School** system is a progressive school system operating three elementary junior-high schools and one senior-high school.

One full-time high school teacher is required to teach English 30/33, Religious Meanings, Accounting 10 and Business Education 10, beginning January 1, 1992.

Applicants may respond, **on or before November 15,** to:

Stuart Williams
Edmonton Christian High School
14304-109 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5N 1H6
Phone (403) 454-0791

The position will be filled as soon as a suitable applicant is found.

Help Wanted

Brampton Second Christian Reformed Church
requires a

YOUTH PASTOR
(ordained/unordained)

to develop programs to challenge our youth to active participation in the Christian life.

Education, training and experience in youth ministry are desirable.

Excellent employment and housing benefits will be provided. More information and a church profile are available upon request.

Resumes can be sent to:
the Search Committee, c/o Joe Grootenboer
9 Willis Dr., Brampton, Ontario, L6W 1A8
(416) 450-6796

HONDURAS

Volunteers needed for mission project!

Do you want to spend a two-week work-vacation in Honduras? Would you like to see mission in action first hand?

- **We need tradespeople to build two simple houses**
- **Time schedule: January 1992**
- **Cost of trip and stay: appr. $1,000**

Please phone as soon as possible! For more information contact:

Gary Prinsen (416) 935-7690
Peter Guetter (416) 892-3784
John Pippel (519) 485-0193

Events/Classified

ICS PUBLIC CONVOCATION and INAUGURAL LECTURE

The **Institute forChristian Studies** invites you to a **Public Convocation** for the graduation of **Junior Members** and the **Inaugural Lecture of Dr. Robert Sweetman**, Senior Member in the History of Philosophy,
"Tracing the shape of wonder, or, medieval miracles for a post-modern age."

Friday, November 15, 1991, at 7:30 p.m. at Knox College Chapel, 59 St. George St., Toronto. Reception to follow.

Calendar of events

Nov. 1-3	'Women Who Win," a fun-filled weekend for women of all ages and denominations. Sponsored by 100 Huntley Street. Bring a friend to **Niagara Falls**, Ont. For info. call (416) 961-8001.
Nov. 2	Giant bazaar, from 11-4 p.m., at Trinity Christian School, 650 Walkers Line, **Burlington**, Ont. Everyone welcome!
Nov. 7	"Sounds of Music" at Providence CRC, **Beamsville**, Ont. An old-fashioned sing-a-long starting at 8 p.m. with The Lincoln Concert Band, the "Cantata Singers" and organ. Tickets: $5 (single), $15 (family).
Nov. 8	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., Bethel CRC, **Newmarket**, Ont. With Dr. Joel Nederhood and the "Crusaders Male Choir."
Nov. 8	Annual meeting of The King's College, **Edmonton**, Alta. At 8 p.m. in the KC Gymnasium. Keynote speaker: Dr. Henry Schuurman, Everyone welcome.
Nov. 9	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., St. George's Anglican Church, **Guelph**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Joel Nederhood with the OCMA (dir. by Leendert Kooij) and organist Andre Knevel.
Nov. 9-10	"Partnership in the Gospel VI" conference at the Hilton and Calvin Seminary Auditorium, **Grand Rapids**, Mich. Speaker: Rev. Marchiene Rienstra. For info. call (616) 454-4888.
Nov. 10	"Dutch Marine Veterans" participate in Remembrance Day Parade in **Aurora**, Ont. Assembly at Aurora Shopping Plaza at 10 a.m.
Nov. 11	One-day conference of the Council of C.R. Churches in Canada (CCRCC), 2 p.m., Third CRC, **Edmonton**, Alta. Keynote speaker: Rev. Jack Vos. Theme: "Structuring the CRC in Canada for Distinctive Service."
Nov. 12	Organ concert by Andre Knevel on the new organ of Cathedral of St. Catherine, 67 Church St., **St. Catharines**, Ont. Starts 8 p.m.
Nov. 13	District meeting of Hamilton-area Chr. Ref. Women, 8 p.m., First CRC, **Hamilton**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Payton (Redeemer College) on: "Blessed are the Peacemakers."
Nov. 14	Back to God Hour Rally, 7:30 p.m., West End CRC, **Edmonton**, Alta. Mass choirs and male chorus. Speaker: Rev. Juan Boonstra.
Nov. 15	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., First CRC, **Red Deer**, Alta. Speaker: Rev. Juan Boonstra.
Nov. 15-16	Toronto Conference on Reformed Theology on the theme: "The Goodness of God." At Knox Presb. Church, 630 Spadina Ave., **Toronto**, Ont. Speakers: James M. Boice, Ronald N. Gleason and Joel Nederhood. For info. call Richard Van Seters at (416) 477-2266, Fax (416) 477-2268.
Nov. 16	Annual membership meeting of Salem Chr. Mental Health Assoc. at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Registration: 9:30 a.m. Speaker: Edward Hagedorn. Lunch is provided.
Nov. 16	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Lethbridge**, Alta. Speaker: Rev. Juan Boonstra.
Nov. 18	Christian Festival Concert at 8 p.m. in Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. Presented by the Ontario Christian Music Assembly, Andre Knevel and Dirk Out (piano and organ), Etty van der Mei (soprano), the Kooij Sisters, all under the direction of Leendert Kooij. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.
Nov. 30	Choir and organ concert by the OCMA (director Leendert Kooij), with organist Andre Knevel, 8 p.m., St. Thomas Anglican Church, **St. Catharines**, Ont.
Nov. 27-28	18th Annual convention of the Chr. Farmers Fed. of Alberta at the Maria Goretti Community Centre, 11050-90 Street, **Edmonton**, Alta. For info. call (403) 428-6981 or 421-8382.
Nov. 30	Annual Tea & Craft Sale, from 1 - 4 p.m., at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby**, Ont. Everyone welcome. For info. call (416) 945-9631.

Real Estate | For Sale

ADA REALTY LTD.
6012 Ada Blvd.
Edmonton, AB
T5W 4N9
(403) 471-1814
Sid Vandermeulen
Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.
Het vertrouwde adres.

Letterlijke en practicale verklaring van het Nieuwe Testament door Matthew Henry, opnieuw uit het Engels vertaald met een voorrede van Dr. H. Bavinck (3 volumes).
Het Oude Testament van het Hoch Deutsch van K.AUG. Dachsel, vertaald in het Nederlands. 2e druk bewerkt door H. van Griethuysen (ANT.SN.) (4 volumes).
Write or call C.T. Luimes, Box 262, Williamsburg, ON K0C 2H0, Tel.: (613) 535-2397.

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

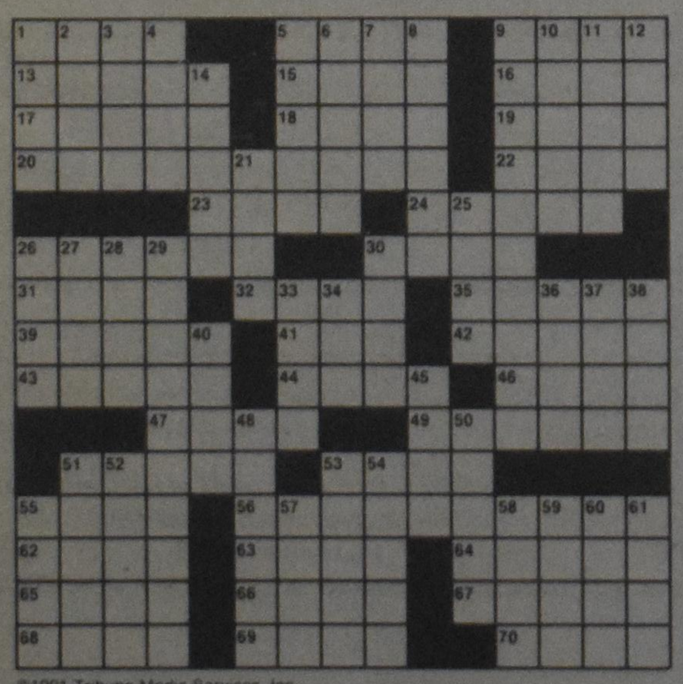
Calls received
— to the Gereformeerde Kerk of Grootegast, Netherlands, Rev. Peter Breedveld of Ottewell, Edmonton, Alta.

Address changes
— Rev. Peter Breedveld: from Dec. 1, 1991, to Jan. 1, 1992: 314 Melores Drive, Burlington, ON L7L 4T8; after Jan. 1, 1992: De Schalk 22, 9861 BD, Grootegast, Netherlands.

— Rev. & Mrs. Henry De Moor, Sr.: Tollenslaan 99, 2741 XZ Waddinxveen, Netherlands; effective Nov. 30, 1991.

Weekly puzzle

by Evelyn Benshoof



ACROSS
1 Destruction
5 Ornamental fastener
9 Mud
13 Void
15 Mine deposit
16 Lulu
17 Tend a fire
18 News item
19 — podrida
20 Postnuptial trips
22 Terrific
23 Patisserie item
24 Flavorful
26 "The Desert Fox"
30 Electric unit
31 Melville opus
32 Precise
35 Gussy
39 Estate
41 Take advantage of
42 Increase suddenly
43 Apt
44 Arrow
46 Seafood item
47 Energetic
49 Manage with means at hand
51 Lake near Carson City
53 Prognostication
55 Delhi royalty
56 Sky sight
62 Arab port
63 Touched ground
64 Vast
65 Cupola
66 Harassed
" persistently
67 Place on a pedestal
68 Kind of silver: abbr.
69 Ruminant
70 Roman calendar date

DOWN
1 Indiscreet
2 Biblical word
3 Privy to
4 Awful weapon
5 Overwhelm
6 Automaton
7 Aesir chief
8 Affects
9 Stupefied
10 Cove
11 Fresh team
12 QED word
14 Part of P.I.
21 Beer ingredient
25 Mountains
26 Cavort
27 Sharif
28 One: pref.
29 Bootlegger's kin
30 Deviate
33 Vallee or York
34 "Born in the —"
36 A Gardner
37 Old oath
38 Verne captain
40 Used car e.g.
45 Govt. agts.
48 Bounty
50 Opportunity for gain
51 Fortunetelling card
52 "What's in —?"
53 Binary compound
54 Bishop's hat
55 Guns
57 Face cream ingredient
58 Skirt style
59 Toward the mouth
60 Give the eye
61 Profits

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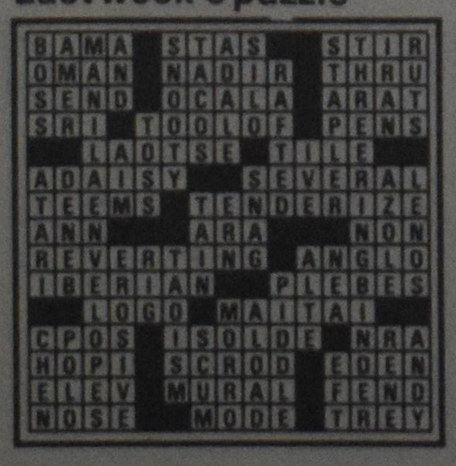
Last week's puzzle



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SALEM
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HEALTH ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL MEETING

Salem Christian Mental Health Association will hold its annual membership meeting **Saturday, November 16, 1991,** at **Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.** Registration at 9:30. Featured will be Salem's Blue Print for the provision of Community — Based Mental Health Services and a workshop by Mr. Edward Hagedorn on Art Therapy and Adolescent Bereavement. Lunch is provided.

For info. contact Rev. A. Dreise at (416) 564-1225

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Books

Robert VanderVennen, page editor

'Earthy yet literate' poetry celebrates trees and wood

Naked Trees, by John Terpstra. Windsor: Netherlandic Press, 1990. ISBN 0-919417-20-5. Softcover, 77 pp., $9.95. Reviewed by Ed Nyman, graduate student in Toronto.

To somehow make the finished piece still recommend the tree. Asking if the skills available to these hands are enough to accomplish the reconciliation.
Voyeur to this flesh and wood you're privileged to touch, privy to the naked lives of trees.

John Terpstra, winner of the 1988 Bressani Award for poetry for his previous volume, *Forty Days and Forty Nights*, is beginning to make a place for himself in Canadian poetry. In his latest volume, *Naked Trees*, he offers again this same style of earthy yet literate poems, rich in language and texture. Terpstra has a gift for playing on the strings of memory and the imagination, nostalgia and hope — tuned to just the right cadence, just the right balance.

Unusual for a book of poetry, all the poems in this volume are about one subject: trees. Their continuity is the result more of the poems' origin than a stubborn perversity on the part of their author. The poems grew out of two successful multi-media presentations in the Art Callery of Hamilton in 1988 called LIVE ART/NAKED TREES. The shows consisted of choreographed dance pieces, specially composed music, and paintings, all performed live by local artists along with Terpstra's own readings from *Naked Trees*. Both the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council later made contributions toward the publication of the manuscript.

The poems, really prose poems, are richly evocative and lyrical — very much Terpstra's style. What I have always found fascinating about Terpstra's poetry is his ability to form layers of metaphor, carefully interweaving two or more stories or two or more levels of significance like a palimpsest. In this way Terpstra evokes, for example, the inextricable link between trees and humanity: "we stand together at the top of our respective heaps" of flora and fauna, 'those who sway somewhat drunken at the top of their heap, and those who topple," the trees having "first persuaded us the earth invited settlement, and silently stepped aside," decreased that we might increase. Terpstra subtly interweaves images of sacrifice and betrayal to develop yet another layer, that of a Christ-like humility. "All day the ladders lean, razzing the branches. And although no one even thought to expect it until now, the startling fact is that the tree makes no response. Opens not its mouth."

Celebration and lament

Each of the poems is a snapshot. Some of them in sequence, chronicling the life of a tree it took 80 years to grow and intertwine around the lives of the people sheltering under it, and only one afternoon of jackboots and blades to diminish into stackable chunks of firewood. Others are discrete parts of a mosaic that together pay homage to the majesty and grandeur of something so much greater than our unrooted humanity. The poems are a lament for the destruction of trees sacrificed to our modern utilitarian values:

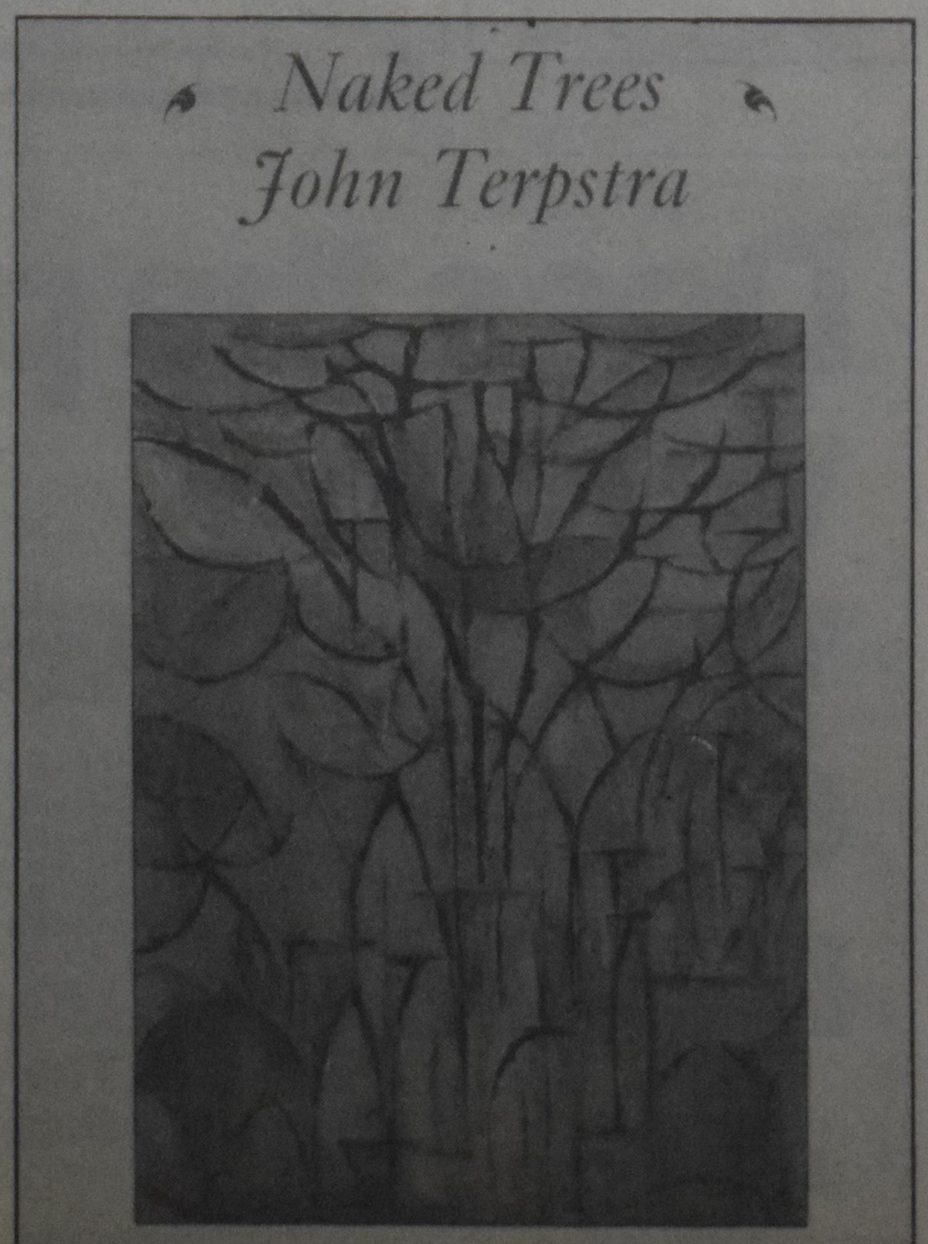
But more than that they are a celebration of centuries of partnership between trees and humanity, of the tremendous richness trees have provided both as living companions and felled timber: the lumber, shingles, spindles and dowels, tools and implements they have given us. Trees, the poems suggest, grow into our lives in more ways than one:

> *Because they are primitive.*
> *Because their roots appear in the lawn like the arched backs of serpents, bulging the driveway, breaking through the basement walls, the sides of swimming pools.*
>
> *Because their branches cast shadows on the bedroom wall, fuelling the imaginations of children.*
> *Because children may want to climb into their branches and could fall, or may have to be helped down, or might not come down, might refuse to.*

[The wardrobe felt] as if it had grown roots into the floor boards; as if the stile and rails that held the whole thing together had travelled beneath the floor and grafted themselves onto the joists below, had grown out toward either side of the house and spread up and down the outside walls, wrapping the entire dwelling, tying their knots tight with rafters at the roof peak.

Naked Trees is more than anything a testimony. In reading, one almost feels as though one has intruded, as though privy to a love poem from a carpenter to his muse. As the author notes in his acknowledgements, the poems were meant to supplement the strictly factual information of R.C. Hosie's *Native Trees of Canada* which, as pure facts never can, did not tell the whole story. The same information forms the skeleton of *Naked Trees* but clothed in a spirit into which love has entered.

It is a book, if I may be pardoned the pun, whose leaves stand heartily recommended!



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Glad

"The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice" (Ps. 97:1).

Wouldn't it be better sometimes if God were less big and grand? If perhaps he would be there to create all things and then again maybe to get us out of trouble when we really need it? If maybe he would win a local election in some small church community but wouldn't get involved in the global political scene?

Thomas Hardy once reflected on that. He wrote a poem about a man who had a complaint in life and decided to take it to God. Only he had to look hard for God because God had sort of drifted off to the other side of the universe. Finally the man locates God and he asks for a hearing.

Things aren't going well on earth, he tells God. Couldn't God do something about it all? After all, he *is* God, isn't he?

"Earth?" replies God. "I don't remember it...."

And then the man gets upset. But God, he shouts, you've *got* to remember Earth! After all, you created it! How could you forget Earth?!

And after a bit of a sigh and a reflective thought, God says to the man, "Oh, now that you mention it, I think I do remember something about Earth. There's some faint recollection that I did something like that....but," he goes on, "it doesn't matter...."

Keep your distance!

Sometimes we wish God might forget us a little bit. A young girl in high school once wrote me a note wishing that God would forget her and her family once in a while. Every time God paid any attention to them, it seemed, he brought some kind of judgment or distress into their lives. Couldn't he just leave them alone sometimes?

That's one way of looking at it. But the psalmist seems to think that another way is better. Perhaps the difficulties we face in life are the very reason why God shouldn't forget and why he shouldn't stay too far away from us. Because it's his very overwhelming *presence* that brings a measure of perspective to life on Earth.

Without the justice of God, without the norms of his structures for creation, without the righteousness that establishes right from wrong in our consciences and in our hearts, life on earth would become a battleground of powers without mercy and wills without restraint.

What's the Good News?

Listen to the way that Lloyd C. Douglas once put it. He's the fellow who wrote those fascinating novels of an earlier generation, *The Robe* and *The Big Fisherman*. He says that when he went to college he boarded in a large house where the owner lived in the basement; but every room on every floor had been converted into an income-generating apartment. And for some reason (maybe because the landlord himself was a musician), nearly all the tenants were singers or instrumentalists. The place was *always* filled with music, some of it grand and good, some of it quite hard to take!

And Lloyd Douglas had this on-going joke with his landlord. They'd meet on the steps and Douglas would greet him by saying, "Well, what's the good news today?!" And invariably the man would reach into his pocket, pull out a tuning fork, rap it against his heel and set it against the wall till the whole stairwell echoed with its sound.

"That's Middle C!" the landlord would say. "That's the good news today! The soprano in the attic may be singing sharp, the cellist may be playing wrong notes and the tenor may be flat today, but that's Middle C! That's Middle C! At least you can count on that!"

The psalmist would agree. What's the good news today? "The Lord reigns! Let the earth be glad!" All the other music in our world may be playing out of tune, but in this be glad: "The Lord reigns!" And by his Middle C all the fiddlers' tunes shall be judged.

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.